

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23 1996

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in the award-winning
Weekend
Money section,
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THE RETURN OF KENNEDY GLAMOUR



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New Labour will ruin it, says Thatcher

Her speech contained a warm tribute to Mr Major's "persistence, imagination and skill" in carrying forward the Thatcherite agenda of the 1980s. According to her aides, she was determined not to become involved in the internal party dispute, which she felt would conflict with her message about the dangers of



Her decision to keep out of the dispute brought some relief to Mr Major, still reeling from the attack on him by

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O.J. Simpson arrives at court for the opening of the hearing yesterday

OJ tells court marks on wife's face came from her makeup

Mr Simpson's most keenly awaited evidence will be about the hour of 10pm to 11pm on June 12, 1994, when the two victims were killed. He has never had to give an alibi in court for that period. But yesterday Mr Petrocelli homed in on five episodes of domestic violence, four of

The queue for 16 seats was a block long by 6am. The seats were assigned by lottery.

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Dr Bray said: "I think it's entirely sensible. I think it's all

Mr Malone said painkillers are extremely safe in normal use. "The way forward is to ensure that full and accurate information reaches consumers. That information should

Last month, the Chief Medical Officer in Scotland, Sir David Carter, called for paracetamol to be banned. Previously Professor of Surgery and director of the liver unit at the Royal Edinburgh Infirmary, he said one in ten of the unit's transplants was for paracetamol poisoning.

Shand Kydd fine

The mother of Diana, Princess of Wales was fined £400 and banned for a year yesterday after being found guilty of drink-driving. Frances Shand Kydd, 60, denied driving with more than 2½ times the legal limit of alcohol in her blood. Page 3

His attackers forced Mr Speakman to reveal where he kept his armoury of more than 40 weapons in different rooms in his three-storey house, but they left behind ten rifles he used for deer hunting and a collection of antique weapons.

Detective Superintendent Nick Biddiss, of Kent police,



Speakman: strangled

Mr Speakman prided himself that he still hunted deer in Scotland every summer and belonged to a number of gun clubs in Kent. He was a former captain in the Royal

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Independence Day

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WEEKEND DRIVERS
Oliver Holt on the thrills and spills of the RAC rally

HOLLYWOOD TAKES ON TWICKENHAM
Andrew Longmore on Phil de Glanville's debut

WHO IS LONDON'S TOP TEAM?
Rob Hughes on Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur

PLUS HOW TO STOP WORKING AND START LIVING
Why you are never too young to retire

MELVYN BRAGG
Starts the 1997 Christmas Quiz

MATTHEW PARRIS
The Columnist

'She will do nothing that seems to rock the boat'

Thatcher resists urge to inflame Europe row

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

BARONESS THATCHER resisted strong pressure right up until the last moment to rewrite last night's speech to make a decisive intervention in the latest European row which has engulfed her successor.

The former Prime Minister was badly torn. Some friends argued it would be a betrayal of her natural instincts not to wade into the single currency debate which has united Europhiles with Euro-sceptics in their opposition to John Major.

But the alternative view, championed by Lord Parkinson and Sir Tim Bell, the architects of her election success, was to steer clear of an internal party feud which she could not resolve but only inflame.

They argued that any diversion into Europe would overshadow her attack on Tony Blair's threat to her legacy. Their view prevailed. Just.

As Lady Thatcher prepared to retire, in the early hours yesterday, her emotions were mixed. It was the sixth anniversary of her resignation as Prime Minister.

But, as she re-read the final

draft of her speech, she reflected that the very European issue which had brought her down was now convulsing the parliamentary party.

Her speech had been billed in advance as loyal to the Prime Minister and tough on Tony Blair. But after the chaotic scenes in the Commons in the ensuing 24 hours, some of her allies pressed hard for her to rethink.

"Only one phrase about the need for a proper debate on the merits of a single currency was needed," said one last night. "We pressed her on it. She is deeply troubled. But she said she was in a no-win situation."

The telephone rang throughout Thursday and yesterday morning at her office in Chesham Place with conflicting messages. Meetings went on through the morning. The speech was fine-tuned even after copies had been sent to Downing Street and Conservative Central Office.

Robin Harris, her chief of staff, argued that the policy high ground was more important than being accused of inflaming internal party feuds which were not of her own



Sir Tim Bell: argued for steering clear of feud

creation. Sir Tim, who remains one of her closest advisers despite masterminding Mr Major's "New Labour New Danger" advertising campaign, was the decisive influence. Sir Tim stage-managed the presentation of the speech. Elizabeth Buchanan, one of his employees, briefed the press.

Lord Parkinson, who was the intermediary with Downing Street and Conservative Central Office and helped to organise last night's dinner, also played a key role

in convincing Lady Thatcher to bury her own private feelings and stay above the Parliamentary fray.

A question and answer session after the 11.55-a.m. dinner, where Lady Thatcher would have been at risk of departing from the agreed line, was ruled out.

"She will do nothing now to be seen as rocking the boat. She will not be blamed, or allow the blame to be heaped on her friends, for losing the Tories the election. What ever misgivings she may have, she fears a Blair government even more. That is why she stayed on side," said the ally.

Some of her most notable supporters in the Commons were conspicuous by their absence last night. John Redwood was speaking in the Great Yarmouth constituency of Michael Cartiss, a prominent Euro-sceptic, who has attacked John Major's handling of the issue. Peter Lilley was also in his constituency. Bill Cash, one of her most staunch supporters, had a pre-arranged speaking engagement for Michael Heseltine in the House of Commons.

Giving the inaugural Nicholas Ridley memorial lecture last night, Lady Thatcher spoke of the combined dangers under Labour of a resurgent trade union movement alongside Brussels' growing influence over workplace laws.

The former Prime Minister concentrated heavily on the successes of her years in Downing Street. She praised John Major's "persistence, imagination and skill in taking it forward".

Lady Thatcher conceded that the Labour Party had shifted its ground but underlined that its leaders lacked the conviction to carry out their new policies in government. She said that Tory policies were successful because they were "based on clear, firmly-held principles which were themselves based on a right understanding of politics, economics and above all human nature".

Labour is unlikely to table a confidence motion, believing that to be the surest way of patching up Tory unity. Iain Duncan-Smith, the Euro-sceptic MP for Chingford, said yesterday that he would be waiting to see the Prime Minister's response over the next few days. However, he said: "There must be some sort of commitment to have this debate."

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said the Government had no desire to stifle genuine debate on the single currency issue. MPs would have a chance to raise the issue in a full-scale Commons debate on Europe before next month's summit.

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New Labour 'will ruin it'

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through in that situation without turning it into a confidence vote. With a majority of one, and with the Ulster Unionists sceptical about the single currency, he would be in a perilous position if just one Tory declined to back him.

John Redwood, the former leadership contender, said Mr Major should ensure that Parliament debated EMU before the Government agreed anything at the European finance ministers meeting and the Dublin summit next month. "If Parliament wishes to debate and influence the Government's negotiations with other European countries, it must be free to do so."

Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said: "I am serving notice today on the Government that Labour will

vote down their motion unless it provides for a full debate in Parliament on these profoundly important decisions."

"Given the anger in the House of Commons at the Government's refusal to face a debate, there is every likelihood that the Government will be defeated in the vote."

The dispute centres upon three documents dealing with largely technical aspects of economic and monetary union. However, as one of them considers a possible restructuring of the European exchange-rate mechanism and another discusses a "stability pact" that would curb spending powers of participants in a single currency, some Tories fear the papers could form the basis of irreversible decisions that would affect the economy.

Examiners resign after A-level marking attacked

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

TWO senior examiners have resigned in a revolt against new guidelines on A-level English, which they claim will penalise candidates for displaying flair and originality.

The remaining members of the Oxford-based team are waging what they describe as a "battle between the academics and the bureaucrats". They claim that new procedures could particularly hit candidates from top independent schools.

The row at the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board started when this summer's English A level was the subject of a damning report by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Scrutineers criticised all the main elements of the examining process in one of the board's three syllabuses.

Michael Halstead, the board's secretary, responded by postponing the English examiners' annual meeting until they agreed to sign a three-page "declaration of compliance", guaranteeing to follow new procedures.

Brian Martin, a writer and English teacher, accused the board of acting like a totalitarian government. Dr John Saunders, the chairman of examiners, resigned after the initial criticism in July, claiming that conditions imposed by the board made it impossible

to ensure that gradings were rigorous and fair. Examiners were given less scope to check grades under the board's application of a code of practice for A level introduced by the assessment authority.

Dr Saunders, a former Oxford don now lecturing at the Chichester Institute of Higher Education, said the new, tightly-regulated system would lose the confidence of leading independent schools, which traditionally took the board's papers. "Often very bright candidates from these schools do produce brilliant but unusual answers which a mediocre examiner might mark down because they are out of line with detailed marking instructions."

Dr Saunders said the assessment authority code was not suitable for an inherently subjective examination such as English. "It attempts to provide academic credibility and the veneer of rigour for what is really an elaborate piece of statistical manipulation. However, a spokesman for the authority said it was not aware of any other boards experiencing difficulty in applying its code. "We reject the reasons given by the examiners for their action."

The row concerns a single team of examiners based at Oxford. The other two syllabuses have not been affected.

Handgun killing

Continued from page 1
Ordinance Corps and served in the Far East as an ammunition expert.

Police renewed Mr Speakman's firearms licence at the beginning of this year and last night a spokesman for Kent police said: "We had no reason to regard him as anything other than a respectable and responsible collector who kept his weapons in the most secure conditions."

Mr Speakman was said to have opposed the Government's proposed legislation to

ban all handguns except 22-calibre. He belonged to the Thanet Pistol and Sporting Gun Club and the Sixth Thanet Rifle Club and was a senior figure in the Ramsgate Gun Club until it closed 18 months ago.

Mr Biddiss said: "One man has already died because of these guns. We don't want anyone else to die because of them." Mr Speakman's body was found by his daughter, Penny Russell, who was to drive him to a nursing home to see his wife, Joan.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oxbridge meets its equals in science

Oxbridge does not have all the best scientists, says a new study. The universities of Glasgow, Dundee, Durham, Leicester, Hull, Strathclyde, Edinburgh, York, City University, London and the Open University all come top in at least one discipline. The Institute for Scientific Information, a Philadelphia-based organisation, assesses the quality of individual research papers by counting the number of times each paper is cited by other scientists. Oxford and Cambridge do best if the total number of citations in any field is counted, but this is partly because they publish more papers. The tables are to be published in the next issue of *Science Watch*.

Damages for Sinn Fein man

A Sinn Fein councillor who accused an Irish Special Branch detective of trying to make him become an IRA informer was awarded £7,500 damages and costs yesterday by the Circuit Civil Court in Dublin. Christy Burke said that former Detective Sergeant Michael Hughes had offered him details of an alleged plot to kill him involving British intelligence in return for information about the IRA.

Caesarean doctor cleared

A surgeon has been cleared of risking lives by refusing to perform an emergency Caesarean while a rival doctor was in the room at Dalisburgh Hospital in South Uist. A second charge, that Dehabrata Chatterjee, 58, a GP and part-time surgeon, endangered mother and child by delaying for 20 minutes while part-time anaesthetist Francis Tacey was there, was also dismissed by the General Medical Council.

Rail strike threat lifted

A threatened five-day strike on ScotRail next week has been called off after talks ended a three-month dispute. Seven hundred conductors, ticket examiners and sleeper staff won a cut in hours from 39 to 37 a week by next June. In return, their Rail Maritime and Transport union said it was committed to restructuring talks aimed at changing working practices.

Schools ban on sheep eyes

Schools and universities have been told to stop using sheep eyes for laboratory experiments. Existing stocks can be exhausted, but the Department for Education and Employment said they must be incinerated after use. The move has been prompted by the fears of government scientists that "mad cow" disease may have passed to sheep. Cattle eyes have been banned from experiments since July.

Nato officer's body found

The body of a Royal Navy officer who worked for Nato intelligence has been found on common land after a search by police and soldiers. Commander Christopher Pott, 49, worked at Nato's Shape military headquarters in Mons, Belgium. His body was found on Bramshot Common, near Liphook, Hampshire. A police spokesman said: "We are not seeking anyone else in connection with the death."

Lottery millions unclaimed

A £2.1 million unclaimed lottery jackpot prize will be spent on good causes. Camelot announced yesterday. The prize-winning ticket was bought in Hull, and its owner had until 11pm on Thursday, six months after the draw, to claim the prize. A claim registered seconds before the deadline was yesterday judged to be a hoax after security checks. Camelot said.

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Eurostar will honour all valid free ticket applications made under the current Times offer, despite the temporary suspension of services. It has agreed to make the offer valid for a further four months to August 31, 1997. As the authorities have not yet announced the

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Princess's mother is convicted of drink-driving

Court imposes fine and a 'lenient' ban

By Shirley English

THE mother of Diana, Princess of Wales, was convicted of drink-driving yesterday after being told by the Oban Sheriff that the evidence she had given under oath was unreliable. He fined her £400 and banned her from driving for a year.

Frances Shand Kydd, 60, denied driving with more than 24 times the legal limit of alcohol in her blood. She was acquitted on a second charge of failing to give a roadside breath test without reasonable cause.

Sheriff William Dunlop said that being so far over the limit would normally warrant much more than the minimum 12-month ban, but he had borne in mind the remoteness of her home on the island of Seil, Argyll, and her 42-year unblemished driving record. The maximum sentence for drink-driving is

six months' imprisonment and a £5,000 fine.

Leaving Oban Sheriff Court after 88 minutes in the witness box, Mrs Shand Kydd smiled but refused to answer questions. In her defence, she accused police and a police doctor of lying under oath and said that her signature had been forged on a form meant to record her consent to blood tests.

But Sheriff Dunlop, who took 50 minutes to reach his verdict having heard evidence from 12 witnesses, said he accepted the testimonies of Michael Woods and Raymond Law, both police constables, and Dr Colin Wilson. "I accordingly reject the evidence of the accused," he said, adding: "I am prepared to

accept that she could not remember what happened."

He acknowledged that distressing news she had received by letter that day, combined with the pain of an ankle injury and the distress caused by crowds who gathered round her car, "had undoubtedly affected her emotionally". The contents of the letter were not revealed in court.

He told her: "I cannot in these circumstances accept your evidence as reliable."

Mrs Shand Kydd was arrested in the seaside town of Oban on Good Friday this year after an off-duty officer saw her walking unsteadily to her green Vauxhall Cavalier, which was parked opposite the

police station. After bumping into other vehicles she got into her car and driven off. Constable Woods said that when she stopped her ten minutes later she was mumbling, her eyes were red and glazed, and her car smelled of alcohol.

But giving evidence for the first time yesterday, Mrs Shand Kydd said that the officers and doctor had lied. She had never signed police form 482, which outlined correct procedures for taking blood samples and confirmed that her consent had been obtained.

Police subsequently lost the form and only a photocopy, taken before it went missing, was available to the court. Mrs Shand Kydd's evidence was supported by John

MacCrae, an independent handwriting expert formerly employed by Strathclyde police. He said: "There is more which would be acceptable in saying it is a forgery, than it is genuine."

Mrs Shand Kydd said that after being unable to provide a breath sample because of a lung infection, she had not been asked to give blood, had not been offered a duplicate phial, and had not signed the form. Speaking clearly and without hesitation, she said the events of that day were "ingrained on her mind". In the morning she had injured her doctor about an ankle injury that she said accounted for her unsteady walk. On returning home she had become

upset by a letter and had cried, which had made her eyes red.

She was not aware that she had committed an offence by refusing a roadside breath test, which Sheriff Dunlop accepted. She told the court: "I have been totally accurate on everything I have told you. For me the truth is readily, wholly and easily within my grasp."

The court had earlier been told that she had told police that she had been fasting because it was Good Friday and had drunk some wine that morning. Tests revealed that she had 306 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. The limit is 80.

Mrs Shand Kydd moved to Seil after leaving the Princess's father, the late Earl Spencer, in 1969. She lived there with her second husband, Peter Shand Kydd, until he left her in 1988. After the separation she was said to have lived an isolated life with few visitors.



Shand Kydd: insisted that she was telling the truth

Shame of debt led boy into gun raid

By A Staff Reporter

A PUBLIC schoolboy held up a building society at gunpoint in an attempt to solve the financial problems he did not dare admit to his family.

Douglas Taylor had just finished his A-level examinations when he left the £12,000-a-year Keswick School and crossed the road to a Bradford and Bingley office. The teenager, wearing sunglasses and a balaclava, pointed a pistol at the head of John McAllister, the only person in the office, and said: "Don't mess me about, give me the money."

Carlisle Crown Court was told that Taylor hoped to steal enough to clear £700 debts but his plan went wrong when Mr McAllister could not find the keys to the safe. The financial adviser grabbed the gun and forced it aside. The pistol went off during the struggle, and only when it fired a blank did Mr McAllister realise that it was not a real weapon.

Taylor slipped away and showed "remarkable calm by returning to his school and carrying on as if nothing had happened", Tom Eaton, for the prosecution, said. He was arrested after the school matron heard about the robbery attempt and found the clothes he had worn under his bed.

Taylor, 19, of Holmewood, Derbyshire, pleaded guilty to attempted robbery and possessing an imitation firearm. He was sent to a young offenders' institution for three years.

The boy told detectives that he had carried out the raid because he had not wanted to upset his parents by admitting his debts. Rod Halligan, for Taylor, said that two days before the raid the boy had received a bank letter demanding that his debt be cleared but he could not bring himself to tell his father. "He clearly saw his father as a man he could not live up to. The expectations in his own mind were too great," Mr Halligan said.

Howard Allen, headmaster of the Lake District school, described the boy as "a perky, bubbly character" who had suffered emotionally when his parents split up. "We expected him to go to university and do well," he said. Taylor had eight good GCSEs but got only two grade Ds at A level, not enough to pursue the diplomatic career his parents had hoped for.



Pffion Aynsley, the captain, in action yesterday. She remembers: "They said girls could not play football"

Parents angered by decision to substitute England kit

By John Goodbody
SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE decision to change the design of the England football team's kit in January, a month after many parents will have bought the current replica shirts for their children as Christmas presents, was criticised by football supporters yesterday.

The present strip, worn by the England team during Euro 96 last summer, will immediately become outdated for fashion-conscious youngsters as Umbro, the official manufacturers, begins selling the new kit, which will last until after the 1998 World Cup finals in France.

In May, England will also be changing its much-criticised grey away strip, adding to the belief that supporters are being exploited in

their eagerness to have the kit that the national team is wearing. The new away shirt will be red, the colour in which England beat West Germany in the 1966 World Cup final.

The leading supporters' organisations, already angry at the way that Premiership clubs frequently redesign their shirts, were united in their condemnation. Steve Beauchamp, of the Football Supporters' Association, said: "A lot of England supporters will be upset. However, this will be balanced by the decision that England is getting rid of the grey kit, which has been very unpopular."

He added that the England replica shirts often sold for £35 to £40, even without a player's name printed on the back. Lillywhite's of Piccadilly, central London, sells a complete

A football shirt once worn by Alan Shearer, the £15 million Newcastle United and England striker, was sold for £810 in aid of the Children in Need appeal yesterday. Sean McNicholas, director of a Hartlepool civil engineering firm, made the winning bid on BBC Radio Newcastle after his wife, Tracy, had been given the shirt to donate to the appeal.

England football kit — shirt, shorts and socks — for £64.

Tony Kershaw, the chairman of the National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs, said: "I would imagine that most parents who are buying Christmas presents of the England replica kit — which could be thou-

sands after the team's success in Euro 96 — have probably bought them."

"To allow people to do this and then have a change early in the new year seems like they are wanting to clear the old stock first before producing a new one."

Mr Kershaw said that if people had already bought the present, that present had been devalued. "I can well imagine little Johnny going to school, and the lads will be pulling his leg for having last year's kit."

However, Umbro, the manufacturer, insisted that retailers were already discounting the price of existing shirts and pointed out that the shirt was still "very valuable and will be a collectors' item".

Martin Prothero, Umbro's director of sports marketing (Europe), added:

"We announced two years ago that the shirts would be changed in 1997. The new kit will remain for at least two years." Asked whether he did not think that the timing before Christmas was unfortunate, he replied: "I think that is fair comment."

□ The England Rugby Union team will finally end the amateur era when it plays in shirts emblazoned with the name of its sponsor, Cellnet, for the international against Italy at Twickenham this afternoon.

Michael Humphreys, the Rugby Football Union's spokesman, said yesterday: "We are recognising the commercial value of these shirts. On the shirts of other countries, such as Australia, the sponsor's name is displayed in three places."

Football, pages 54-56

Champion girls beat boys at their own game

By David Powell

LIFE was tough at the top for soccer's newest champions yesterday. There was the commercial interest from Reebok and Coca-Cola, the pressures of fame — and a key match with the boys from their school.

A few years ago, the girls of Ysgol Y Dderi primary, Llangybi, would not have been allowed to play the boys even in the playground. After all, the boys were the local district champions.

Now, captained by Pffion Aynsley, 9, the girls have caused a stir in West Wales and beyond by developing their football skills to the point where they won the Lampeter District Schools five-a-side tournament against nine boys squads, and will now represent the district at county level.

The girls did not even concede a goal in open play, only in their semi-final and final penalty shoot-outs. Dafydd Wyn Morgan, the school's PE teacher, said: "We have had companies on the phone showing interest in advertising and promotion. Newcastle United fan club magazine has also been on in connection with a story on women's football."

For three years, the school's boys had been the district champions. The girls approached Mr Morgan last year, asking if they could also play in the tournament. They lost every match. He said: "If somebody had told me last year that they would have

won that tournament this year, I would have laughed."

With coaching and by integrating with the boys in playground football, the girls improved. The boys' successes have been the girls' inspiration. "The boys try to simulate what Manchester United and Newcastle are doing and the girls try to simulate what the boys are doing. The boys have been their heroes for so long and they are modelling themselves in attitude and skills."

Pffion remembers when girls were not allowed to join in: "We wanted to play in the playground and they said girls could not play football."

Through the integration of the sexes in PE, the boys have come to accept as normal the inclusion of girls in playground football. Mr Morgan said: "I have been here five years and I remember when only the boys went into the football area."

Yesterday, in the first match between the school's boys and girls teams since the district tournament, the boys gained revenge, winning 5-3. Pffion scored twice.

The Llangybi girls will still represent the district in the county tournament. Mr Morgan said: "Theoretically, I could have the best boys and the best girls, but the girls' team won the last competition and that will be the team that goes on." After primary school age, girls are prohibited from playing football against boys.

Police 'out to kill' suspected burglar

By A Staff Reporter

POLICE were "out to kill" Wayne Douglas, whose death in custody sparked a riot in Brixton, an inquest jury was told yesterday. Patrick Doyle, who witnessed the incident, said that the black former postman was punched, kicked and stamped upon as police behaved like a "pack of hyenas going for the kill".

Mr Doyle, giving evidence on the fifth day of the inquest at Southwark, south London, said that he was at his flat next to a park in Brixton early one morning last December when he heard shouting outside. He looked out to see Mr Douglas, a burglary suspect, confronting a number of police officers in the street below.

He heard them shouting "put it down" and then saw a knife thrown to the ground. Two of the officers then rushed Douglas, "pinned" him to the pavement and delivered five or six baton blows to his arms as he screamed in pain.

Mr Doyle told the jury that he ran outside to see up to seven officers hitting Mr Douglas again. This attack was much worse and lasted for some minutes.

"They were raining blows on the boy with batons," he said, stepping out of the witness box to demonstrate a rapid over-arm action. "Some of the officers were also stamping on him... on his chest, arms, legs, back, head, everywhere. They were also kicking him... I do not know how many times they hit him," he said. He left when a police officer, noticing he was there, told him to go and threatened him with his baton.

Cross-examined by barristers representing the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and a number of police officers, Mr Doyle denied he had exaggerated his evidence.

The jury has heard that Mr Douglas, from Sydenham, southeast London, was stopped by police because he matched the description of a burglar who had just robbed a couple in their bed at knife-point. Officers have described how Mr Douglas repeatedly threatened them with knives as they chased him through Brixton.

Mr Douglas was taken to Brixton police station, but then on to hospital. Seventy minutes after his arrest he was pronounced dead. The inquest was adjourned until Monday.

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Astonishment at reasons for ban on widow's baby

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

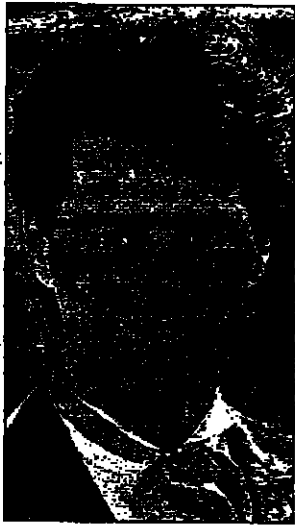
THE four reasons why Diane Blood cannot have her dead husband's baby were disclosed by the Government's fertility watchdogs yesterday and greeted with astonishment, distress and derision by the widow and her doctor.

Among the objections cited by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority were that Stephen Blood, who was in a coma dying from meningitis when his sperm was removed, had received no counselling beforehand.

It said: "Parliament has enacted a careful code allowing for the posthumous use of sperm only if specific requirements are met. In particular, there is a clear requirement for the written and effective consent of a man after he has had the opportunity to receive counselling and after he has had a proper opportunity to consider the implications of a posthumous birth. These important requirements were not satisfied in this case."

The authority also complained that Mrs Blood had no connection with Belgium, where a team of world-class doctors in Brussels have agreed to her request for assisted conception.

The HFEA was reluctant to accept the widow's word that



Stephen Blood: died without giving consent

her husband had consented, during a discussion after reading a magazine article at their home, to having his sperm used if he should die. Finally, it pointed out that Mr Blood had never considered, let alone consented to, having his sperm taken abroad.

The HFEA, which spent all Thursday afternoon debating Mrs Blood's request, consists of 20 doctors, philosophers and laymen. It is chaired by

Ruth Deech, principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, and her deputy is Lady Brittan, the wife of the European Commissioner Sir Leon.

Other members include the Bishop of Edinburgh, Richard Holloway, the actress Penelope Keith and the former BBC executive Liz Forgan.

Mrs Blood, 30, an advertising executive, said from her home in Worksop, Nottinghamshire: "They must have been digging around for reasons to refuse. Baroness Warnock says my situation wasn't considered when they were making the law about consent. I find it strange that someone should doubt her word."

"We are in Europe so it is not really relevant to say I have no connection with Belgium. England is to Europe what London is to Nottinghamshire."

Professor Ian Cooke, who agreed to store Mr Blood's sperm at a donor bank in Sheffield, when told there was a dying man whose wife wanted to have his child, said two samples were removed from Mr Blood: one 24 hours before his death and the other just before he died.

According to Professor Cooke, the HFEA has power



Diane Blood with her press officer Paul Plant. The HFEA was digging around for reasons to refuse, she said

only over the storage of sperm, not its use. He reacted with disbelief to the ruling and described the reasons as specious and ridiculous.

Professor Cooke, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Jessop Hospital for Women in Sheffield, said he made the snap decision to help Mrs Blood after being contacted by the city's Hallamshire Hospital last year.

"I had about five seconds to

make a decision, a slightly different time frame to the bodies that have been involved publicly."

"It seemed to me in the face of that uncertainty and the time of day that I had one opportunity to make a decision. If I made the wrong one I could never retrieve the situation."

"There is not a shred of compassion expressed by the HFEA. They have taken an

extraordinarily legalistic view of the whole process. The HFEA would be perfectly happy to give this now-single woman an unknown person's sperm simply on the basis that the person had signed a consent. The donor might be dead for all we know."

"If you are married to someone there must be an inference that you are prepared to have his children and that he is prepared for you to

have his children."

The HFEA considered a letter from Stuart Horner, who chairs the BMA ethics committee. It said: "The essential issue is the quality of [Mr Blood's] consent. From the information which has been portrayed in the media there is no evidence that Mr Blood had clearly thought through the issue and the full implications of a child being created after his death."

Husband desperate for a child, says mother

By EMMA WILKINS

STEPHEN BLOOD was desperate to have a child with his wife Diane and would have made a wonderful father, his mother said yesterday.

Gill Blood, 54, said Stephen often discussed his desire for children with the rest of his family before his sudden death from bacterial meningitis last year.

Mrs Blood, who lives near her daughter-in-law told how her grandchildren, David, 10 and Kevin, 8, were thrilled whenever their uncle Stephen visited.

"Stephen was brilliant with the boys. The moment he walked in the door he would be down on the floor on his hands and knees playing games with them."

Mrs Blood and her husband Brian, 56, are dedicated supporters of Diane's campaign to have Stephen's baby.

"We are totally supportive of Diane and we know she is telling the truth about Stephen's wishes," Mrs Blood said. "I have known Diane since she was 16 and just started courting with Stephen and she is a truthful, honest and genuine person."

Mrs Blood, married for 34 years, says the chairman of the HFEA, Ruth Deech, would not have reached the same decision if the discussion had been about a member of her own family.

Gay ad for police 'is the last straw'

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A SENIOR police officer has attacked his force's decision to advertise for recruits in a newspaper for homosexuals.

Acting Detective Chief Inspector David Bullett, of South Yorkshire Police, said he could not lift a pint at his local public house without facing the derision of the landlord. He has now written to a local newspaper criticising his force.

Mr Bullett said: "I went down to my local and the landlord could not stop laughing. I think the senior management of the force have misjudged the mood of the public and most police officers. I fear we are sending out the wrong message to recruits and the principles of policing are being left behind."

The advertisement in *Gay Times* shows PC Tom Goodhill tipping his hat and asking: "Fancy a chat with Tom?" Mr Goodhill, who is married with children, is a member of the force recruitment department.

Mr Bullett, in charge for

crime work at a station near Rotherham, said the advertisement was "the last straw" after a string of management initiatives and courses which he has questioned. "I am a serving police officer with over 28 years in the South Yorkshire Police. I must say that I am ashamed and embarrassed to be a member of this organisation," he said.

After many tribulations over European regulations and equal opportunities, the advertisement was too much. Mr Bullett said he was not making a personal attack on Richard Wells, chief constable of South Yorkshire.

Mr Wells said he stood by the advertisement and added that his force was not the first to advertise in gay publications. He said the initiatives mentioned by Mr Bullett were about "trying to make us an organisation that cares about people and deals with them fairly". The force said no action was likely to be taken against Mr Bullett.

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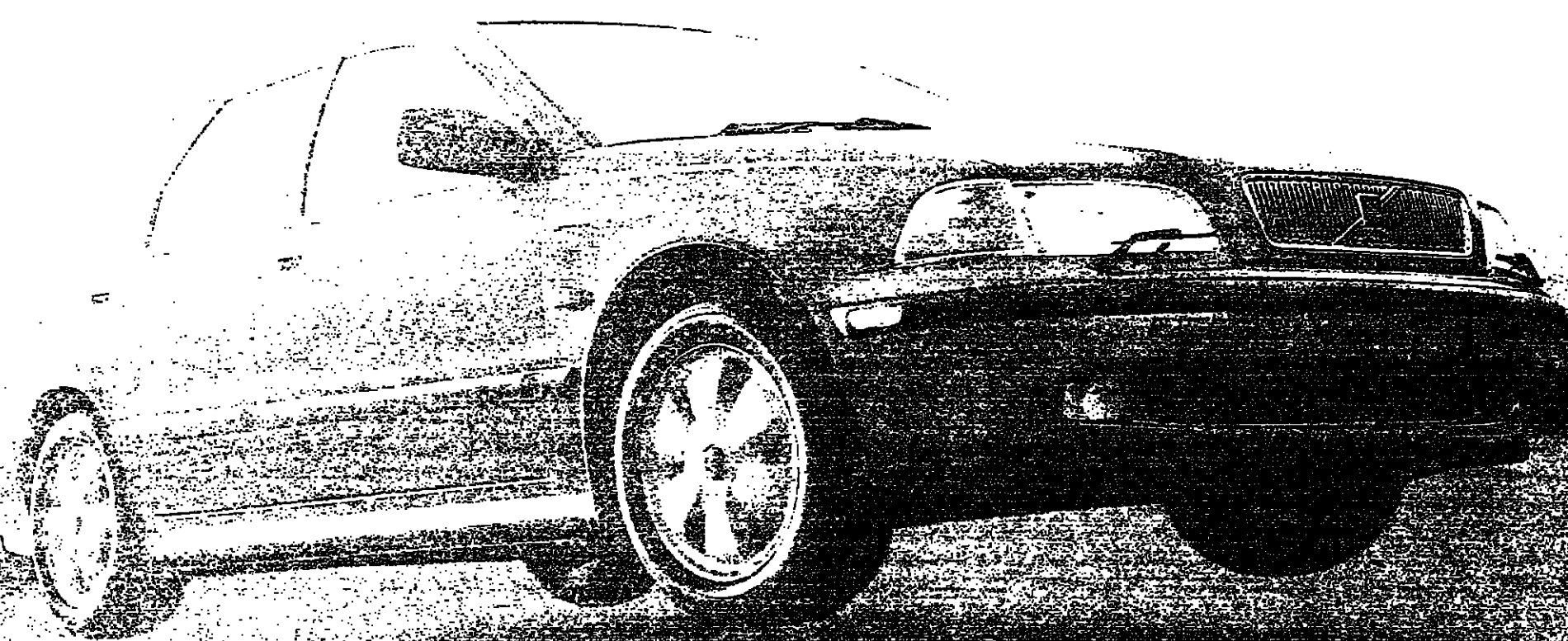
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Eurotunnel fails to halt purchase of open wagons

By Jonathan Prynn and Joanna Bale

EUROTUNNEL is pressing ahead with a £14 million order for new Channel Tunnel freight wagons with even less fire protection than the lattice-sided train that was wrecked on Monday night.

The 72 new wagons on order will have just four thin steel strips on each side to support the roof. The freight wagons in use now have a grille of girders on either side to protect the lorries on board, but safety experts say that they should be fully enclosed to prevent fire spreading.

The new generation of freight wagons will allow Eurotunnel to shave precious minutes off the 35-minute crossing time, according to rail experts. "They will be able to bowl along at close to their maximum speed of 86-90mph all the way out of the tunnel on the 1 in 90 uphill pull," Barrie Hughes of Rail Express magazine said.

A Eurotunnel spokeswoman

Oil firms fined over refinery explosion

TEXACO and Gulf were each fined £100,000 yesterday after a huge explosion and fires at a refinery in Pembroke, west Wales, which injured 26 workers.

The companies, which run the refinery in partnership, were sentenced at Swansea Crown Court, where they admitted breaches of Health and Safety regulations arising from the blast in July 1994.

The court was told that the explosion, which could have killed three men, was caused by technical faults and the failure of control systems to shut down the refinery when alarm signals flashed. Texaco and Gulf admitted two charges each of failing to ensure the responsible safety of their employees, contractors and the public. The companies were also ordered to share payment of £143,700 prosecution costs.

The companies paid out some £180,000 compensation for damage to public property. The court was told that a £2 million monitoring system had since been installed.

said the order was going ahead despite safety concerns prompted by the fire. Eurotunnel also has an option for an additional 144 wagons for delivery in 1999.

The wagons are being built by the French firm Arbel-Faure and are due to be delivered in spring 1998, when four British-made locomotives are due to enter service. Eurotunnel is also awaiting 17 lattice-sided wagons ordered to cope with the rapid rise in demand before the fire.

The safety of the wagons was still being considered yesterday by members of the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, which initially opposed their use but was persuaded to change its mind by Eurotunnel. The Anglo-French authority, which rejected Eurotunnel's pleas on Wednesday to be allowed to resume services immediately, has not yet set a date to meet again in Calais. It asked Eurotunnel's operation director, Alain Bertrand, to submit a further safety report and, according to the Channel Tunnel Safety Unit at the Department of Transport in London, this has not yet been done.

Last night there seemed little hope of an early resumption of passenger services. The tunnel remained closed to all but a few freight services. By yesterday morning, 25 freight container trains, the only category with safety clearance, had passed through.

Contractors are expected to remove the nine wagons still inside the tunnel next week, after rebuilding buckled tracks to enable them to pull them out. The burnt-out wreckage of the locomotive has been moved a few feet but will probably remain in the tunnel while the fire investigation continues.

Hundreds of British lorry drivers are trapped across the English Channel because of the accident, which by their own admission has led to a major traffic jam on the Channel. The French drivers are impeding traffic on major roads from Lyon to Calais as part of their demand for better working conditions. In a campaign they call Operation Escargot, they either travel at a snail's pace or block the road on the pretence of having broken down. There have been reports of British drivers who show their anger being dragged from their cabs and assaulted.

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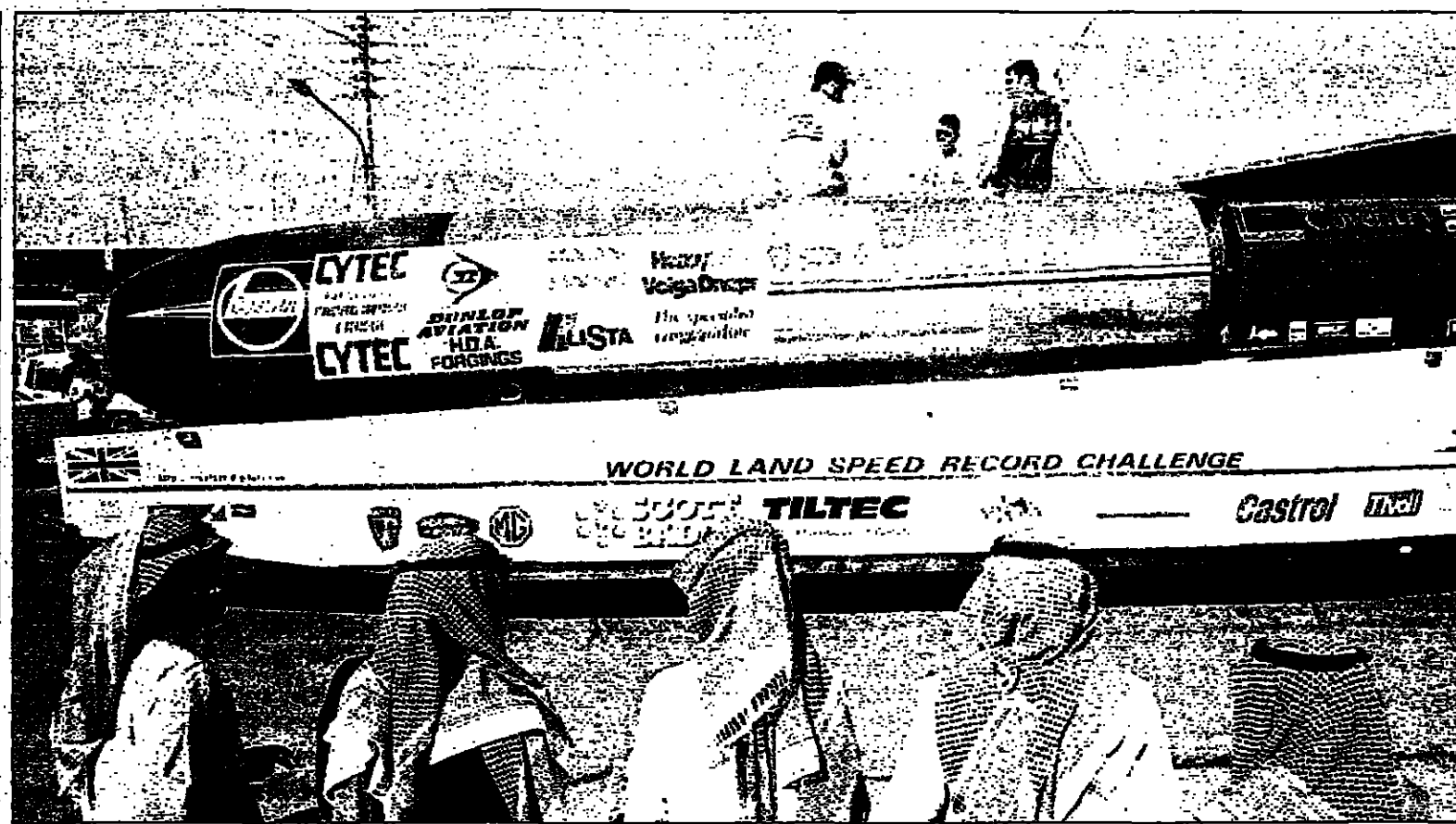
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Danger, uneven road ahead: Jordanians watch the jet-powered Thrust as it passes through a desert village on the way to its 12-mile track

Speed record stalls after challenge from camel

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Editor

A BRITISH attempt to break the world land-speed record is stalled in the Al Jafir desert in Jordan, after weeks of problems ranging from mechanical breakdowns to torrential rain and an obstructive camel.

In nearly a month, the Thrust SSC car has reached a top speed of 330mph, which is 303mph short of the current record set in 1983 by the team leader, Richard Noble. Spare parts

for repairs are being airlifted out. Problems with the car have been matched by the difficulties of coping with the bleak surroundings.

Volunteers from the Royal Jordanian Air Force have helped with the back-breaking task of picking up stones and pebbles from the desert surface, covering up to 12 miles at a time, so that the sand is perfectly flat.

Heavy rainstorms have threatened to obliterate the high-speed track. Then, as the weather cleared on Thursday,

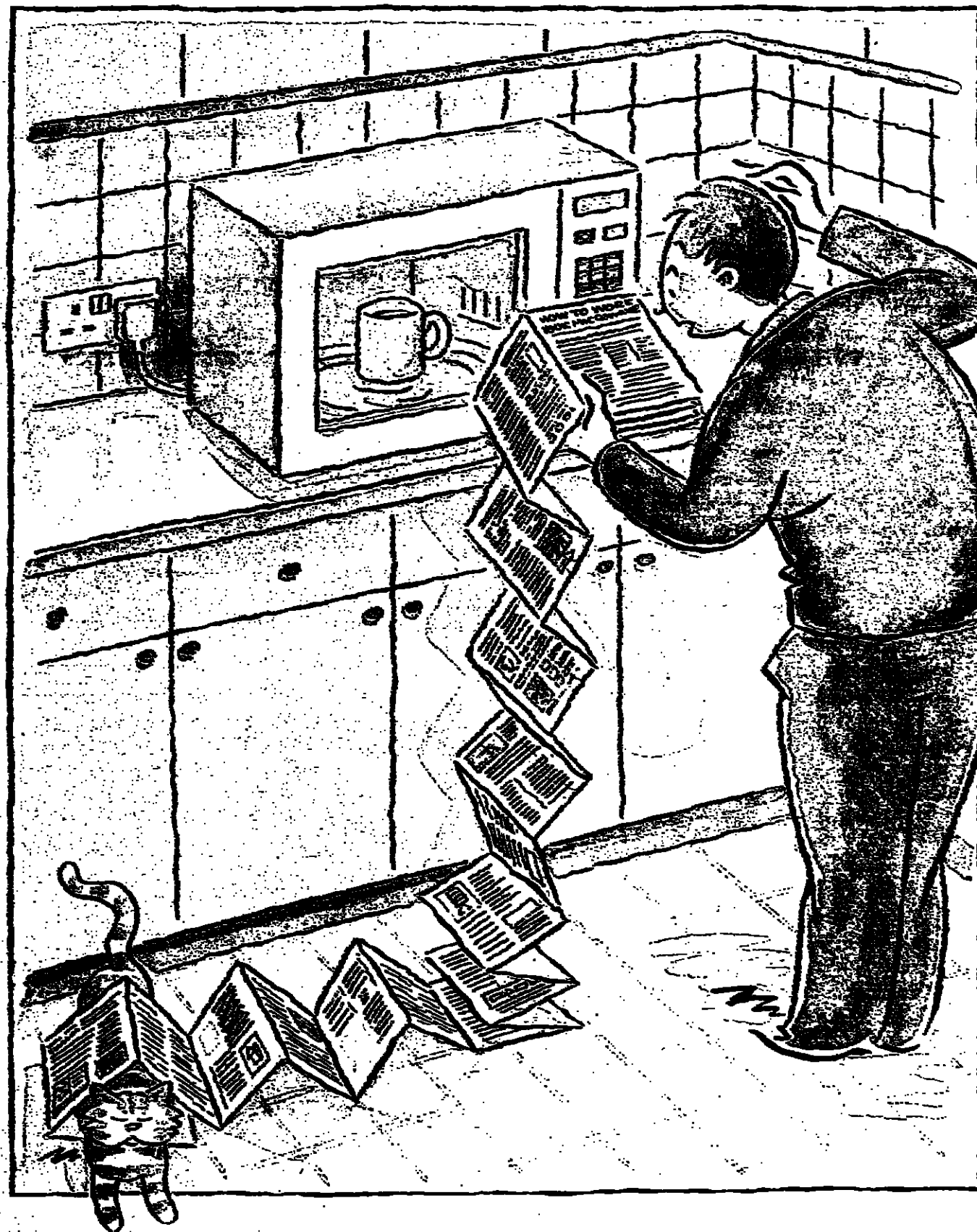
a camel wandered onto the track near to the start line.

Ron Ayers, Thrust's designer, asked the handler to move it, but was refused without the payment of cigarettes. Mr Ayers is a non-smoker. The handler led the camel out to the centre of the track and tied up its legs so it could not move until payment was forthcoming. Only the intervention of police solved the problem.

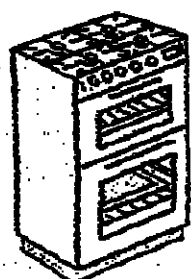
Andy Green, the RAF pilot driving Thrust, then reached 304mph before

he shut down the engines and deployed the three brake parachutes after finding he was unable to steer. Mechanics discovered that the weight on the steering rear wheels was so great that it was deforming the suspension plus, forcing the car to pull heavily to the left.

Another run will not take place until some time next week and even then it is unlikely an attempt on the record will be made until Mr Noble is certain the car is handling safely.

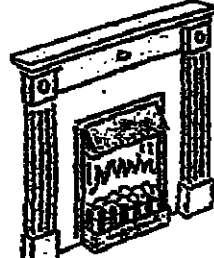


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THE SUNDAY TIMES

KING CON



Armand Hammer was America's Robert Maxwell. He wooed the rich, the royal and the powerful, plundered other people's wealth and successfully portrayed himself as a philanthropist and peacebroker. Six years after his death, Hammer's hidden life has at last been cracked open, due to access to Soviet and FBI archives and the bitter memories of those he duped...

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Faust manuscript puts high price on Schumann's soul

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

SCHUMANN'S 122-page working manuscript for *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* has emerged from a private collection for the first time since 1910 and is expected to fetch about £800,000 at auction.

The manuscript is to be offered on December 6 by Sotheby's, the first time scholars will have seen it since it went into private hands. It offers an extensive insight into the composing process but is yet to be subjected to modern scholarship.

One section bears Schumann's transcription from Goethe's printed text which he annotated: a series of *aide-mémoires* indicates, for example, which passages should be performed by soloists and which should go to the chorus. Among revisions, sketches and multiple versions of certain sections, are two completely different settings of the *Chorus Mysticus*.

Simon Maguire, Sotheby's musical manuscripts expert, said the document represented "the moment of the conception of the piece". He added: "It demonstrates his many facets — Schumann the *lieder* composer, incomparable in his sensitivity to the greatest German poetry; Schumann the symphonist, the pioneer in the musical expression of Roman-



Schumann: worked on the score for ten years

tic thought; Schumann the most literary of all composers, now confronting the task of elucidating with music the most important German text of his century."

He noted that the manuscript of Schumann's Second Symphony sold a few years ago for £1.5 million. That, however, was the final version for the printer, rather than the composing draft. "In this, he makes all the decisions about setting Goethe's text."

The handwriting in brown ink and pencil is hard to decipher and the manuscript is covered in crossings-out and

alterations in red and blue crayon. Schumann began his setting of *Faust* in 1844 and it was to occupy him for nearly ten years. Schumann completed it in 1853, shortly before his decline into madness. It was premiered in its entirety only in 1862, after his death: it was largely neglected until championed by Benjamin Britten, among others.

Margit L. McCorkle, a Schumann scholar who is preparing the catalogue *raisonné*, said: "This is an extremely important manuscript. It is a very complete set of the sketches in a number of different versions, which is unusual for Schumann, as he didn't normally work so long on a composition. This shows him working at various styles, in some respects in different styles, as they changed over a period of time. That alone makes it valuable."

Mr Maguire said: "Goethe believed in a synthesis of Romantic and Classical styles in art and Schumann addressed this concern in the *Scenes* with his use of Romantic harmony and expressive music."

On November 27, Christie's is selling Mahler's copy of Beethoven's Third Symphony. Mahler's annotations cover the score: his extensive revisions include his supposed improvements to Beethoven's orchestral parts. It is estimated at about £28,000.



Schumann's manuscript shows "all the decisions about setting Goethe's text"

Crede

Journey to true Christian faith must follow a shared path

Michael Nazir-Ali

WE ARE certainly more than the sum of our parts. We are more than the ideas and values that we imbibe from the culture around us. We are more even than the relationships that make up so much of our personal identity. There is an experienced reality that relates us to all of these aspects of our existence and yet which transcends them all. The paradox is that the "I" is illuminated in the very relationships with the external world to which it cannot be reduced. Without these it remains a vague substratum, without content and form.

There can be little doubt that this is true of faith. On the one hand, faith is hardly authentic without a deep personal commitment. On the other, it must be nurtured by a tradition, coming down the generations, and sustained by a community. In the past, and still in parts of the world, this relationship was simple. More or less, the whole community believed and individuals were brought up in the community's tradition.

This has all changed in today's world. It is true that there is a great yearning for belief. The religious imagination is still strong. It is also true that quite significant numbers still have traditional beliefs about God, Jesus Christ and the Bible. Such beliefs are often held, however, without belonging to any believing community and sometimes without even feeling the need to belong. The churches' response to this is somewhat ambivalent. Some mourn the passing of Christendom when virtually everyone belonged to one church or the other. Others see it as an opportunity for mission.

Culture and tradition have never been static. They are changing continually, whether for internal reasons or because of contact with external movements or ideas. Today Islam and Christianity continue to

spread throughout the world and, in doing so, both challenge and assimilate the various traditions they encounter.

As traditions come to be "checked by jowl" with one another, it is important that they should not retreat into self-justifying fidelism. Representatives of religious traditions often claim that their tradition cannot be understood from the outside.

Against such a view, it is important to emphasise what Bishop Kenneth Cragg has called the "mutual accountability" of religions. In terms of the claims they make and the effects of such claims on their followers, religions are accountable to one another and at the bar of public opinion. In such matters, neutrality is never possible but people from one tradition should study the texts and teachings of another.

The last great vision in the Bible is that of the heavenly city coming down from God. It is a vision of community, of belonging both to God and to one another. The Church can never be content with merely individual religion, for it knows that, sooner or later, such a religion will cease to be Christian. Christian faith

certainly has an intensely personal aspect to it but can be nurtured and sustained only in the fellowship of the Church down the ages and throughout the world. This should not, however, lead to a neglect of those who question the tradition. It may be that out of such questioning, authentic renewal will come. The coming of the heavenly city is an act of God who "makes all things new". It is not a vindication of any one tradition, though everything that is true and good and beautiful is affirmed in it.

The Right Rev Michael Nazir-Ali is Bishop of Rochester

At your Service
Weekend, page 14

Bride who had stroke loses claim

A BRIDE-TO-BE who was left paralysed by a stroke just after being put on the Pill yesterday lost her High Court negligence claim against a GP, Leena Vadera, now 32, had sued Dr Joan Shaw, who had prescribed Logynon from her surgery in Hatch End, west London, in October 1986.

She suffered a "catastrophic" stroke the next month, and was now wholly paralysed, Raymond Croxon, QC, her counsel, told Mr Justice Allott. Ms Vadera, of Hatch End, can communicate only with her eyes.

The judge said that he was "profoundly sorry" for Ms Vadera but he was not able to find on a balance of probabilities that she sustained her stroke by reason of the oral contraceptive prescribed for her.

A costs order was made against Ms Vadera, who is legally aided, which will not be enforced without leave of the court.



heavenly city is an act of God who "makes all things new". It is not a vindication of any one tradition, though everything that is true and good and beautiful is affirmed in it.

The Right Rev Michael Nazir-Ali is Bishop of Rochester

At your Service
Weekend, page 14

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'Ridiculous' film frames Picasso, says art expert

A NEW film about Picasso has been accused of denigrating him for his treatment of his mistress in an attempt to attract feminists at the box office.

John Richardson, one of the world's leading authorities on the painter, says *Surviving Picasso*, the Merchant Ivory movie about the artist with Sir Anthony Hopkins in the lead role is a "very dull" film about a "very great man."

Mr Richardson, a former Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, was a long-standing friend of the artist who died in 1973. He criticised the film, which opens in Britain on December 26, for trying to "demonise the artist for his supposedly manipulative and sadistic treatment of Françoise Gilot, his mistress from 1943 to 1953, and thus attract a feminist audience."

He explained that Gilot was portrayed as a victim: "In fact, Françoise was the least submissive, least neurotic and least vulnerable of the women in the artist's life."

Writing in *The New York Review of Books*, Mr Richardson said Ruth Praver Jhabvala's script was "simplistic, soap opera-ish" and said that Hopkins looks as much like Henry Moore as Picasso. "Nor has Hopkins's wish to have 'gotten the rhythm of the man' been fulfilled."

"Instead of coming across as the most Spanish of Spaniards he looks very English and sounds faintly Welsh; a sardonic, skittish don whose teasing of girls gets a bit out of hand. There are occasional

■ Critics believe Picasso has been badly treated by a new film about a crucial period in his life which shows him as a male chauvinist pig, writes Dalya Alberge



Richardson: attacked "very dull film"

echoes of Hannibal Lecter, but they hardly suggest the 'magnetic appeal' that Merchant hoped to capture."

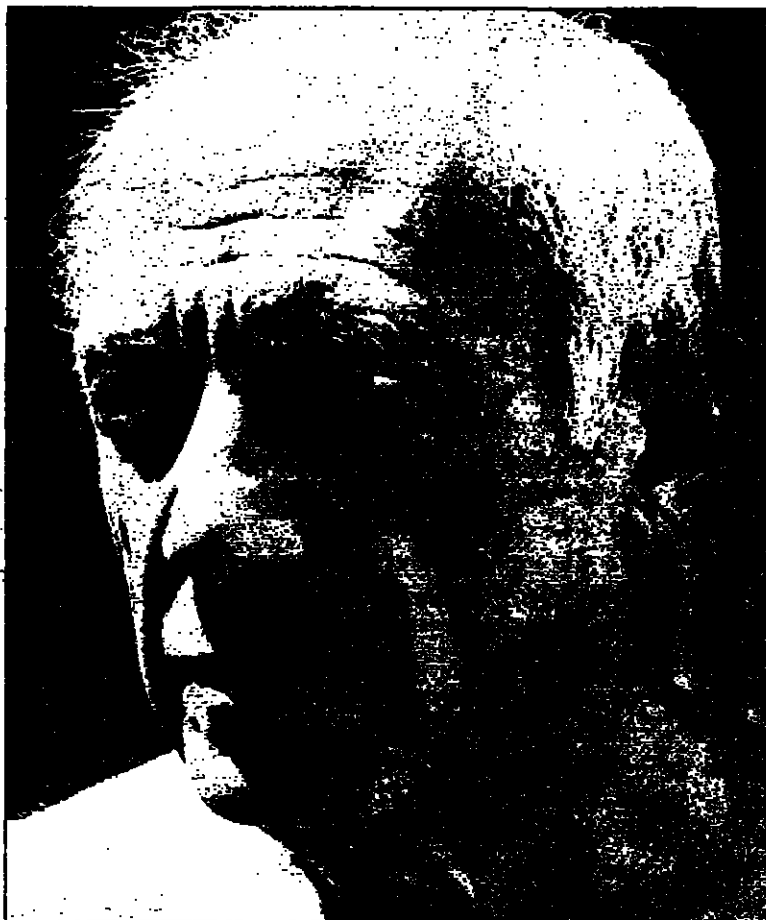
All Hopkins can muster of the magnetism for which Picasso was famous "is an arch, twinkling, or a sinister gaze," says Mr Richardson. The film is based on Arianna

Stassinopoulos's biography *Creator and Destroyer* which, Richardson says, was dismissed by some scholars. "Merchant Ivory had originally approached Gilot in the hope of obtaining film rights; they were met with an adamant refusal and so had no option but to sign up Stassinopoulos and pretend that their film is based on her book."

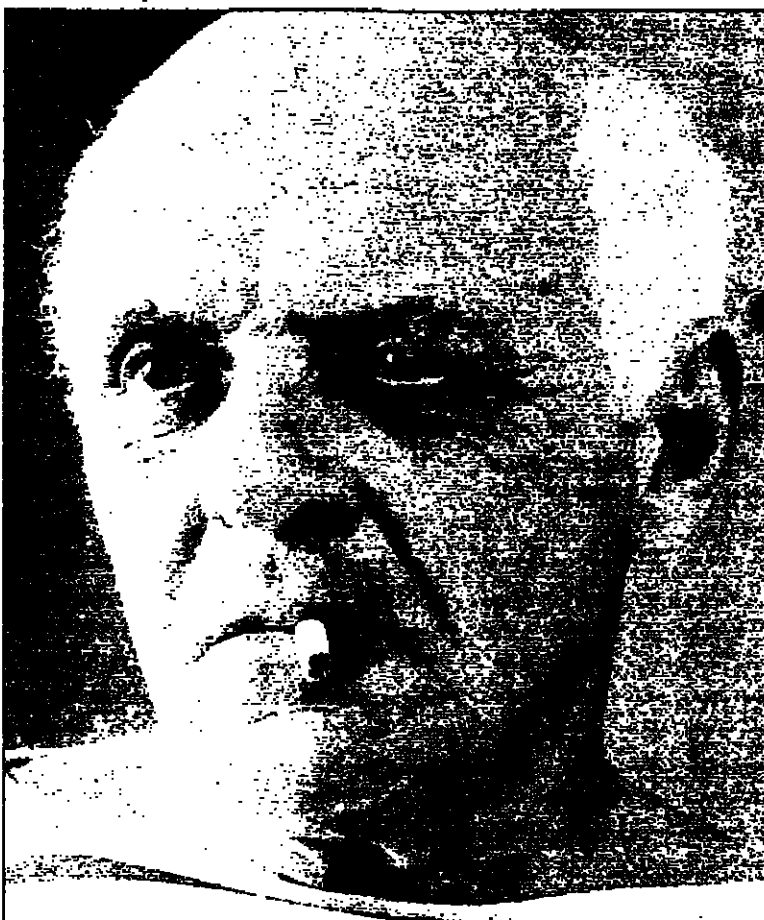
"Why they have singled out Picasso as the quintessence of male chauvinist piggery I have never been able to fathom. His conduct pales if we compare it to Matisse's failure to come to the assistance of his wife and daughter when the Gestapo arrested them in 1944."

Richardson, who has just published the second volume of his four-volume biography of Picasso, said that Gilot and Picasso's son Claude were "horror-stricken" by the film, and took steps to stop it being made. "Surviving Picasso" not only fails to entertain: it puts the artist and his work at considerable risk by playing into the hands of modern art haters."

Richardson is not alone in his attack. When the film opened in America, one reviewer observed: "It is hard to believe that the same people who created such fine films as *A Room with a View*, *Howards End* and *The Re-*



Picasso was the most Spanish of Spaniards, says John Richardson, and not the sardonic, skittish don played by Sir Anthony Hopkins



mains of the Day could eject a catastrophe like *Surviving Picasso*."

Another called it "phenomenally tedious, allowing critics to retrieve the cliché about watching paint dry". Michael Fitzgerald, a Picasso scholar and professor of art history at Trinity College in Hartford

in Connecticut, said that the period on which the movie focused, 1943-53, was a remarkable phase of Picasso's life. "He had become a world figure — a great artist and a representative of freedom throughout the Western world. There was none of that real dignity in the film. He

was like a bumbling, selfish old man."

The important thing about Picasso is the art he created and not simply his romances. In this film, there was no process of making art. The application of the brush strokes was as if it was done by computer. When we saw

that, we were screaming with laughter and sadness."

One Picasso scholar, who insisted on anonymity, said that the film-makers had depicted the artist as "a monster worthy of Adolf Hitler": "I thought it was ridiculous and offensive."

Marilyn McCully, a former

lecture at Princeton University and Richardson's collaborating author, said: "Arianna's book is something my students might have pieced together." Nobody from Merchant Ivory was prepared to comment.

Arts, pages 22, 23

Opposition leaders urge inquiry into party funds

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR faced demands from the leaders of the seven opposition parties yesterday to allow political funding to be investigated by the Nolan Commission. The leaders voiced "serious doubts" about the sources of almost 50 million they claim the Conservative Party has raised the past year and called for full inquiry before the general election.

The demands — which came as Labour announced details of the latest donations given by businessmen, swelling to 16 million the amount it has received in individual donations — were made in a letter to the Prime Minister signed on comments by Brian Lawhiney, the Tory party chairman, in which he called for "greater openness" when questioning Labour party funding.

The letter, welcomed "Dr Lawhiney's change of heart" and assumed that you would

Leslie Silver, the former chairman of Leeds United Football Club, has given Labour £25,000, the party announced last night. The gift from Mr Silver, who made his fortune from paint manufacturing, goes to the party's election fund. Mr Silver said: "I've always been a Labour supporter, but under Tony Blair the party has transformed itself. More and more people in business are coming over to Labour."

now welcome an independent inquiry to reassure you about the sources of all party funding". Mr Major has made clear that he does not consider that party funding should be investigated by the Nolan Commission, although Lord Nolan has indicated that there could be an investigation after the general election.

The letter challenged Mr

Major: "If you do not agree to such an investigation, we will assume that you believe there is something to hide over the sources of Tory party funding."

The letter was signed by Tony Blair, Paddy Ashdown, Liberal Democrat leader; David Trimble, Ulster Unionist; Alex Salmond, Scottish National Party; John Hume, Social Democratic and Labour Party; Dafydd Wigley, Plaid Cymru; and Ian Paisley, Democratic Unionist Party.

Mr Blair reacted to Mr Major's allegations about a "secret fund" to finance the Labour leader's private office by announcing that Alec Reed, chairman of Reed Executive, the employment agency, had given Labour £100,000. Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, and Lord Hollick, chief executive of United News and Media, were also named as giving between £25,000 and £50,000.

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The Prime Minister's misjudgment has led to a crisis he could have avoided, says Philip Webster

Stubborn Major fails to see the big Euro picture

John Major was in his most determined, even stubborn, mood when he learnt on Thursday night that the 1922 Committee chairman was on his way to tell him to back down over the single currency debate. Aides warned him that the press was a buzz with talk of him facing his biggest revolt, confidence votes and crises. He was told that the next morning's headlines would be gruesome.

Mr Major, who tries to keep in touch with moving events through CeeFax, may have been surprised but he was not giving in. When advised that some MPs were threatening to desert him in a confidence vote, he is understood to have said: "Do they want me, or do they want Labour? Some of them had better make up their minds fast."

As it happened, he bumped into Sir Marcus Fox, the 1922 chairman, as they rushed through a Commons division. It is assumed that Sir Marcus tried to pass on his message

from the 1922 executive, which had asked him to act quickly. But as for receiving a formal delegation, Mr Major was in no hurry: that could wait until next week.

Mr Major, it seemed, had spurned yet another opportunity to make the retreat that many believe is still inevitable if he is to go to the Dublin summit next month with authority to take decisions on behalf of Britain.

Life would have been so much easier if the Government had quietly given in a week ago to the demands for a debate in the Commons on three directives relating to preparations for monetary union. A debate late at night on a harmless motion for the adjournment would have satisfied many of the dissidents. It could still have defused the issue on Thursday afternoon if Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons, had given in then and announced a debate in next week's business.

By standing firm, at least until next week, Mr Major

has ensured that the issue remains a live one, at a time when he may be hoping that the public is concentrating on Tuesday's Budget. It is because the sceptics fear that the pro-European Kenneth Clarke may agree to decisions in principle at the meeting of European finance ministers on December 2 that they want a debate to box him in.

But the Prime Minister's famed personal intelligence system, which helped him to climb to the top of the greasy pole and to stay there when all looked lost, let him down badly this week.

After the turmoil at Westminster on Thursday night, recalling all the worst days of Maastricht, backbenchers spent yesterday in their constituencies wondering just how Mr Major could have so misjudged the mood in his party that he was able to unite against him the likes of the ultra-Euro-enthusiast Hugh Dykes with the arch sceptic Bill Cash, and

Tony Blair and the whole of the Labour Party.

"He has brought a constitutional crisis upon himself and for once it is not the sceptics against the Europhiles — it is the legislature against the executive," a senior Tory MP said yesterday.

What so surprised even Mr Major's friends was that he appeared to be out of touch in his Question Time clash with Tony Blair. Irrespective of the argument about whether the Government should be granting a separate debate on the single currency, Mr Major should have known that he would provoke derision with his claim that the three directives on preparations for a single currency had received "detailed scrutiny" in European Standing Committee B.

Anyone at that meeting — and those present included John Ward, Mr Major's parliamentary private secretary and his "eyes and ears" — knew that that was unsupported, except in a strict technical sense. What occurred in Committee Room 10



on Wednesday morning was closer to fact than parliamentary debate. In any case a "take note" motion was defeated when the sceptical Tory John Whittingdale voted with Labour.

Mr Major's remarks suggested that even at that stage — after a two-week campaign

that had very much come to the boil the day before — he still did not fully appreciate the anger on his own side. Mr Blair told his office staff later that Mr Major had "looked petrified". But the Prime Minister ought to have known what was coming.

On Thursday morning Mr Major and Mr Clarke had

discussed with other Cabinet ministers and Tory business managers how to play the demands for a full debate on preparations for the euro and the "stability pact" — the arrangements for dealing with countries that breach budget deficit limits — which could affect Britain even if it keeps the pound.

By that stage it is believed that the business managers were ready to make a concession. The idea appears to have been floated that a debate on the single currency rules on an adjournment could be held at a quiet time next week. That would not have satisfied the sceptics who want to vote directly on the issue, but would have peeled off the pro-Europeans.

But the idea did not find favour with Mr Major or Mr Clarke, who told them that there was no likelihood of legislative decisions on single currency preparations being taken at the European finance ministers meeting (Ecofin) on December 2. Mr Major repeated that line in the Commons later but was accused of misleading MPs by some sceptics, who pointed to a letter from Mr Clarke to the European Legislation Committee on October 21 in which he sought the views of the committee "in time for the Government to participate in political decisions on them at the Ecofin meeting".

Senior ministers accepted that there was a "discrepancy" between the two positions but Mr Clarke's aides pointed out that there was all the difference in the world between "political" decisions and the "legislative" decisions needed to put them into effect. It was a distinction that failed to impress angry Tories as they charged indignantly around the Commons lobbies on Thursday evening.

Two reasons appear to lie behind Mr Major's refusal to budge. In common with all politicians he hates being accused of U-turns. Aides went to astonishing lengths

after he changed his script for the Queen's Speech and announced that the Government, not backbenchers, would bring in Bills on stalking and child abuse to claim that it was not the about-turn that it clearly was. To have bowed even to the 1922 Committee at such short notice was something that Mr Major was not prepared to countenance.

Perhaps more important, Mr Major believes, according to close associates, that the furore has been inspired by the Euro-sceptics and that the likes of John Redwood are using it to their advantage. As for the involvement this time of many pro-Europeans, Mr Major believes that they have unwittingly been caught up in a septic campaign. He is said to remain deeply suspicious of Mr Redwood, last year's leadership challenger.

This weekend Mr Major will have to decide whether to use the "nuclear" option — the confidence-vote tactic — if Labour goes ahead with its threat to try to vote down the Commons motion noting the single currency directives. Nobody knows when it will be tabled but until it is passed neither Mr Major nor Mr Clarke can tell their EU colleagues that the proposals have been scrutinised by the Commons. As a Labour source said yesterday: "We would portray them as lame ducks in Dublin."

Unless he gives way on the debate, Mr Major might have to employ the confidence-vote ploy to get the motion through. It would be an almighty gamble with scores of Tory MPs forced to vote against their true wishes. One or two could not be relied upon. Mr Major has gambled often during the past six years and won. This time, as even his friends say, he has pushed himself into a position where the wager, so close to an election, would be too great.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23 1996

Berisford discloses approach by bidder

By Keith Rodgers

BERISFORD, the kitchen, doors and food equipment company that owns the Magnet home improvement chain, yesterday disclosed it has received a bid approach that analysts believe may be worth up to £365 million.

Analysts believe a bidder would offer between 175p and 200p per share. Even at the current price of 151½p, a deal would give Alan Bowkett, chief executive, a windfall of more than £5 million on his ordinary shares alone. He has options over a further 1.6 million shares, which could give him a gross profit of £1.6 million at the current price, and holds more than 42,000 convertible loan stock units.

Jay Pritzker, an American investor who is a non-executive director, has 7.68 million shares, worth £11.6 million.

Berisford shares rose 30½p after the company said preliminary interest had been expressed about an offer, although it is unclear whether a bid will be made.

Potential bidders include Tomkins, the UK conglomerate, and Electrolux, of Sweden. Interest is likely to be strong in America. Welbilt Corporation, Berisford's US catering equipment subsidiary, accounts for 60 per cent of group turnover. In addition, Berisford has valuable US tax losses, the legacy of its days as an investor in the New York property market.

News of the approach came as the company reported a drop in pre-tax profits, before a £1.2 million exceptional charge, from £26.8 million to £25.5 million for the year to September 28. Group turnover climbed to £512 million (£403 million), while earnings per share were 12.5p (4p). The final dividend, payable on January 31, is 3p (2p) a share, making a 4.5p (3p) for the year.

Times, page 32



Alan Bowkett could expect a multimillion pound windfall from his shares if a bid for Berisford was successful

Italy seeks to rejoin ERM within days

By Janet Bush in London and Richard Owen in Rome

ITALY has asked for the lira to be readmitted to the exchange-rate mechanism as a key step in its drive to join Europe's single currency club in two years' time.

In a day of feverish speculation, everything pointed to the lira rejoining the mechanism on Monday, four years after it was unceremoniously ejected along with sterling. The remaining uncertainty surrounds whether Italy can agree on a lira rate against the mark with its European partners — France in particular.

Antonio Fazio, Governor of the Bank of Italy, yesterday confirmed that Italy had requested re-entry for the lira and several sources said that Italy had asked for a meeting of Europe's key monetary committee, expected to convene in Brussels today.

Romano Prodi, Italy's Prime Minister, said yesterday the lira would return to the currency grid in a matter of "a few hours or a few days". Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Italy's Treasury Minister, said his government would "seek the re-entry of the lira into the ERM in November", implying re-entry either this weekend or next.

Signor Prodi said the recent approval of the country's budget deficit cutting plans — which on paper at least reduces Italy's deficit to the Maastricht treaty limit of 3 per cent in 1997 — had allowed technical talks on the lira's re-entry to begin.

Observers believe that the monetary committee will today come to an agreement on the lira's new parity and thus re-entry. Giorgio Radaelli, senior economist at Lehman Brothers in London, put the chances of re-entry on Monday at 85 to 90 per cent and said that a central parity of 1,000 lire to the mark was his best bet.

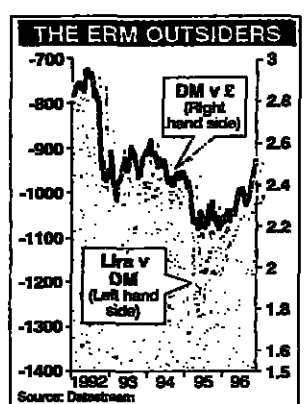
He said once a country had successfully converted the monetary committee it would be unprecedented for agreement not to be reached. Failure could lead to the markets wreaking considerable damage on the

Italian currency. The lira was quoted at about 997 to the mark yesterday, near to the 1,000 level that a Reuters poll of ten economists last week chose as a likely central ERM rate. This would split the difference between Italy's desire for a highly competitive rate of 1,050 and France's desire for a rate of 950. France is particularly keen that Italy is not allowed to lock in any more of the competitive gains achieved since it left the ERM in 1992.

Yesterday's events were in contrast with public comments in Italy earlier in the week when official caution bordered on pessimism on the question of lira re-entry. As late as yesterday morning, Signor Ciampi told *La Repubblica* that Italy "cannot re-enter the ERM in a short time" and "we cannot yet fix a date".

The new tone suggests that the Prodi Government wants to use re-entry — or preparations for re-entry — to demonstrate to increasingly sceptical Italians that its painful "budget for Europe" is working, and so counteract growing public disenchantment over the high cost of joining the future single currency, for which ERM membership is regarded as a pre-condition.

The new optimism also implies that Germany and France, the key players, have accepted Italian arguments that the 1997 budget is a force for stability and fiscal prudence, and that the main sticking point — the lira/mark rate — is nearer resolution.



THE ERM OUTSIDERS
Source: Datastream

Shares surge on Budget hopes

By Michael Clark
Stock Market Correspondent

THE London stock market enjoyed its biggest one-day rise for more than five years as City investors began to pin their hopes on a tight fiscal Budget from the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Tuesday.

Boosted by heavy turnover on the futures market, a firm start to trading on Wall Street and the covering of short positions by market traders, the FT-SE 100 index surged back through the 4,000 level. It closed at its best of the day after a leap of 64.9 points to 4,018.7. It was the biggest one-day gain since March 6, 1991 with more than 878 million shares traded. The index dipped below the 4,000 level last month, after the Bank of England raised base rates by a quarter point. Fears of another rise to accompany the Budget have been dampened by the recent strength of sterling.

By contrast, the FT-All Share index, of top 850 companies, was down 0.2 per cent at 1,945.10. Brokers said that this could be accounted for by the fact that much of the demand was focused on the privatised utilities, which made up a large percentage of overall turnover. They have been under a cloud of late, because of fears of a windfall tax from a Labour administration.

Among the companies being chased higher were Railtrack, up 20p to a record 374p, against the 190p at the time of flotation. Brokers said a new wave of optimism had swept the market. Fund managers appear convinced that the Chancellor will try to avoid an inflationary Budget. A tight policy would be well received by the gilt market and that would feed through to equities.

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Sector in focus: holiday companies

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Delayed tax threat to pension funds

By Jon Ashworth

BRITAIN'S pension funds could face tax bills running into hundreds of millions of pounds in a delayed Inland Revenue reaction to a City investment spree in the 1980s.

The Revenue is seeking to tax gains made on the sub-underwriting of new stock market issues. It says pension funds lose their tax-exempt status in such circumstances, which the funds dispute.

The Railways Pension Fund, with £1 billion under management, is challenging the Inland Revenue in a case that will be watched closely in the industry. In the 1980s pension funds regularly

earned substantial commissions from sub-underwriting — providing financial guarantees to new share issues. The Revenue says that tax should be payable since the funds were "trading" on a regular basis. The Railways Pension Fund is seeking clarification.

John Rogers, director of investment services at the National Association of Pension Funds, said yesterday that the potential cost to pension funds could run to several hundred million pounds. Tax Commissioners in Birmingham are due to begin hearing the arguments early in the new year.

British Gas bills fiasco worsens

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

THOUSANDS of people are failing to receive gas bills as chaos continues to engulf British Gas's billing system. The company also faces controversy over a huge jump in complaints, which have more than doubled since last year.

The latest problems arose when British Gas failed to transfer customers' records to the new billing network. The nationwide computer operation has already thrown bills into pandemonium by issuing thousands of red reminders and disconnection notices without having sent out bills.

British Gas said it would stagger the payments of those

who receive hefty bills after months of delays. The Gas Consumers' Council said over 2,700 customers had complained of not getting a bill in the six months to October 31. That may be the tip of the iceberg. Some British Gas insiders believe some households have been permanently lost from the system and may never receive bills. Complaints about British Gas Trading, which handles bills, rose 101 per cent in the ten months to October 31 compared with the same period a year ago. Some 28,615 people lodged complaints compared with 14,237 in 1995.

Stationery Office wields jobs axe

MORE THAN 900 jobs are to be axed at The Stationery Office, the former Her Majesty's Stationery Office, which was privatised and renamed last month (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The Norwich-based company, which employs 2,500 staff, said that the redundancies were necessary to turn the loss-making HMSO into a profitable business capable of competing in the private sector. The business is being streamlined from 14 to four divisions:

printing, publishing, business supplies and facilities management. HMSO lost £45 million in 1995 and the business is set to lose £60 million this year, on turnover of £360 million. It hopes for a "modest profit" next year. The Stationery Office, which publishes Hansard, is chaired by Rupert Pennington, former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. A consortium backed by Electra Investment Trust and Robert Fleming completed the £54 million

takeover of HMSO on October 1. Unofficial estimates had valued HMSO at between £100 million and £130 million. News of the job cuts was broken to unions yesterday. Management and unions are to meet next week. The company hopes that the redundancies will be voluntary. Bob Thian, chief executive, said the Stationery Office had a sound business base but had to undergo substantial change if it was to reverse the current losses.

Multi-utility

The first six months of trading at Hyder, the newly created Welsh water and electricity utility, has resulted in a profit rise of 25 per cent. A further increase in profits is expected during the winter months because of increased demand for electricity. Page 30

A change is as good as . . . the person making it

Let's get the shoguns out of the way first. Adapt or die. The only certainty is uncertainty. If it was right for you five years ago, it's probably wrong now. Join the Webmasters, and you'll never need to leave your house again.

The rhetoric of revolutionary change is relentless, especially at work. But what about the reality? How much has actually changed over the last 20 years? Of course the pace of office life has honed up. The pressure on businesses to be competitive means that most people with jobs are now working harder as well as smarter than they used to. We tend to be better informed and better managed, too, although our facility to forget how things were may make us reluctant to admit this.

Computers have paced up the mechanical aspects of business and information transmission in an extent unimaginable two decades ago. Coupled with growing globalization, these changes have consigned the old command and control management style to his-

tory. People at the top of companies no longer have the time or up-to-date specialist knowledge to add value to all important decisions. Hence the empowerment boom, and the great upsurge of interest in leadership programmes, effective internal communications and so on. Hence, too, the tendency for good teamplayers rather than autocrats to acquire top jobs. This trend is confirmed by the results of a recent survey of 300 blue-chip companies, who rate the ability to inspire trust and motivate as the quality most necessary in tomorrow's leaders.

I recently had the opportunity to debate all this with an audience of finance directors: not people who look kindly on flavour-of-the-month fads, and a marked contrast to those I spend most of my working life with — newly appointed chief executives with a brief to shake things up, professional change agents, even the occasional poor soul helplessly addicted to continuous improvement. I ought perhaps to explain

that I am a change consultant, albeit an unusual one. A psychologist by disposition as well as training, I have little confidence in the durability of organisational change based entirely on revamped systems. Tinkering with organisational structures is fun, but it's associated in my mind with images of deckchair assistants on the *Titanic*. I take it as axiomatic that no one will ever invent a working procedure which can't be frustrated by an operator who doesn't understand its purpose, and I find it much easier to persuade people to abandon old

them and US mindsets if employees are regarded as the engine of profit rather than a fixed cost. Ten years ago this view of organisational life would have received a dusty reception from finance people. But times move on, as witnessed by their invitation to me to lead the discussion. My brief was to provide an overview, based on two decades of experience in helping companies to change themselves. More spe-

EXECUTIVE VOICE



John Nicholson

cifically, I was to present a set of verifiable propositions which my hosts could use to unravel the conundrum that lies at the heart of all debate about organisational change.

It goes as follows. No one now denies that companies must regularly realign themselves to remain in kilter with the environment in which they operate. As it changes, so must they. Adherence to this

principle on which all organisational change rests, was far from universal 20 years ago. The fact that it has become an unquestioned business imperative is largely due to the even-handedness of the recession, in which recessions treat dinosaurs and ostriches. After a quarter of a century of trial and error experimentation, we also now know how to bring about real and lasting change in organisations. Unfortunately, these two important advances in understanding must be set against the fact that the majority of large-scale attempts to change the way companies operate are unsuccessful — in the eyes of those who plan and pay for them.

This is not to say that they fail entirely. Sometimes the will to change in an organisation is strong enough to overcome the unrealistic aspirations of its leaders and even substantial technical flaws. A two-year stint at the Cabinet Office as special adviser on the management of change

gave me a chance to study many of the most ambitious programmes then underway, and to work out why some fail, while others achieve their objectives. Taking the 20-year perspective, it's also possible to discern some really significant shifts, both in the way in which organisations face up to the challenge of changing themselves and in attitudes towards change.

Where once there was always someone who asked if it wasn't unnatural — or at least un-British — to teach new tricks to old dogs, most people now have quite a sophisticated understanding of the change process — if only because they know what happens to companies who fail to master it. They may complain of initiative fatigue, and grumble about the difficulty of helping to plan for tomorrow while making sure the business forges ahead today, but they're glad to be involved in the discussions. There's a new realism about, which allows people to come to

terms even with "downsizing", provided that those asked to leave are demonstrably contributing least, and that they're treated in a way which doesn't offend those who are staying on.

Which brings us to the final twist in the story. During the last recession, change became synonymous with job-cutting. Maintaining production and service levels for less cost is the traditional way to remain competitive, at least in the short term, when times are hard. To manage growth, however, you need a very different approach. Instead of reducing staff numbers, you aim to adjust working patterns and practices so as to increase every individual's contribution to profit. This enables you to react quickly to opportunities, while preserving the corporate pool of knowledge and goodwill. So not everything it seems is changing for the worse.

Dr John Nicholson is chairman of Nicholson McBride, the business psychology consultancy.

Hyder 25% higher as bid pays off

By OLIVER AUGUST

HYDER, the multi-utility group, has lifted interim profits by 25 per cent and expects a further increase for the full year as electricity consumption surges during winter.

The former Welsh Water, which changed its name to Hyder after acquiring its neighbouring power company, Swalec, in January, said that the takeover had been a "demonstrable success".

Pre-tax profits rose from £80 million to £100 million in the six months to September 30. Earnings per share, however, increased marginally, from 57.4p to 57.7p. The interim dividend rises from 12.6p to 14.6p.

Iain Evans, Hyder chairman, said: "We are confident that [Swalec] should be materially earnings-enhancing on a full-year basis, with costs falling, according to our pre-acquisition assessment."

The statement on Swalec's earnings-enhancement potential was welcomed by analysts. The shares closed up 10.1p, at 752.1p.

Mr Evans said that synergies between the two utilities were being achieved ahead of schedule.

Since the takeover, 275 jobs have gone. A further 625 are expected to go by March 1999.

Hyder's consumer electricity bills have fallen by 11 per

cent and water customers have been given a £9 annual rebate for four years.

Capital spending in the six months was £128 million, up from £88 million in the corresponding period last year. Pre-tax profits from unregulated businesses rose to £13 million, from £3 million.

Hyder is a 40 per cent partner in consortiums with contractors to build the Lewisham extension of London's Docklands Light Railway and to widen the M40 between Oxford and High Wycombe. Both projects receive government funds through the Private Finance Initiative.

Earlier this month, Hyder said that it had scrapped a computer investment designed to provide a system enabling it to compete for electricity customers in 1998 when full competition begins. Instead, the company will develop the computer system it inherited from Welsh Water.

Mr Evans said: "We are confident that, by extending our existing system, we will be able to meet all our regulatory and legal requirements arising from the deregulation of the electricity market in 1998 at a more effective and economic cost."

Tempus, page 32

Sales slump hits shares in Fine Art

By KEITH RODGERS

SHARES of Fine Art Developments, the mail order and greeting cards group, plummeted yesterday as the company gave warning that annual profits will be substantially below expectations.

The drop prompted analysts to suggest that the company could attract a takeover bid, possibly from N Brown, the mail order company.

Fine Art said that agency mail order sales had fallen 11 per cent in the 33 weeks to November 15. The shares fell from 439.5p to 262.5p, knocking more than £140 million off its market value. Brokers downgraded their full-year forecasts from about £46 million to £30-£32 million.

The blame for the £7.5 million drop in mail order sales was attributed to a poor early-season marketing campaign. Last year the 33-week period accounted for 75 per cent of sales. However, the company said that its direct retail and stationery activities were performing well.

GWR may sell Dutch loss-maker

By ERIC REGULY

GWR, the radio group paying £71.5 million to take full control of Classic FM, has said that it will continue expanding overseas but may sell the loss-making Classic FM stations in the Netherlands and Sweden.

The Dutch station is GWR's worst performer, and the company will decide soon whether to sell it or bring in a partner to help to boost its marketing. Ralph Bernard, GWR chief executive, said: "One way or the other, it won't be losing money for us next year."

GWR, he said, will also sell a couple of small British stations to meet rules limiting market share. Acquisitions and strong advertising sales helped to lift GWR pre-tax profits by 55 per cent, to £8.2 million, in the year to September 30, on turnover of £52.2 million, up 63 per cent. Earnings per share were 7p, up 11 per cent. A 1.53p second interim dividend, due on December 12, makes the total dividend 2.6p, up a fifth.

Tempus, page 32

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.17	2.21
Austria Sch	16.70	17.20
Belgium Fr	54.82	56.52
Canada \$	2.359	2.189
Cyprus Cyp£	0.798	0.745
Denmark Kr	10.25	9.45
Finland Mk	8.18	7.53
France Fr	6.95	6.30
Germany Dr	2.67	2.46
Greece Dr	4.13	3.88
Hong Kong \$	13.63	12.83
Ireland £	1.20	1.00
Israel Sh	1.06	0.97
Italy Lit	5.75	5.10
Japan Yen	2625	2470
Malta	201.70	185.70
Netherlands Gld	0.825	0.860
New Zealand \$	2.974	2.744
Norway Kr	2.50	2.28
Poland Zl	10.36	10.36
Portugal Esc	11.16	10.36
S Africa Rd	8.53	247.00
Spain Ptas	218.00	205.00
Sweden Kr	11.79	10.89
Switzerland Fr	2.28	10.89
USA \$	175000	167000
	1.780	1.680

Rates are for short denominated bank notes as supplied by Barclays Bank

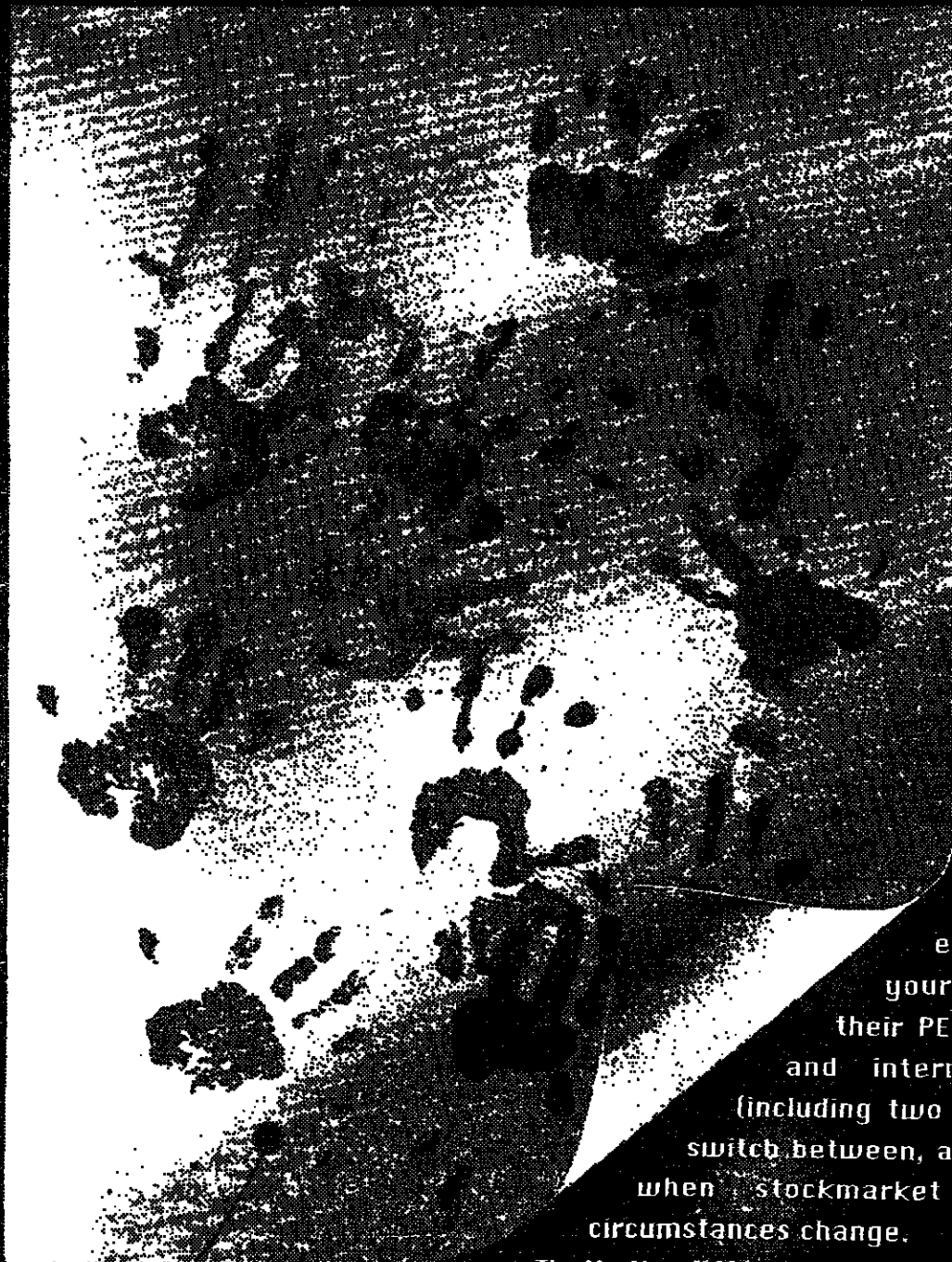
Rates are for spot transactions bank notes as supplied by Barclays Bank.

THE SUNDAY TIMES GROUNDED

McDonnell Douglas losing a string of vital aircraft orders suddenly raises doubts about its ability to survive as a civil or military contractor into the 21st century . . .

Business Focus — The Sunday Times tomorrow

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Index pushed 64 points higher by big investors

INSTITUTIONAL investors embarked on a giant spending spree, convinced that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, would present a tight fiscal Budget on Tuesday. This drove the FT-SE 100 index to its biggest one-day rise for more than five years, climbing back through the 4,000 level with a surge of 64.9 points to 4,018.7 as almost 900 million shares changed hands.

Yesterday's rise stretched the gain on the week to 60.5 points. The index dipped back below the 4,000 level last month after base rates were raised a quarter point to 6 per cent.

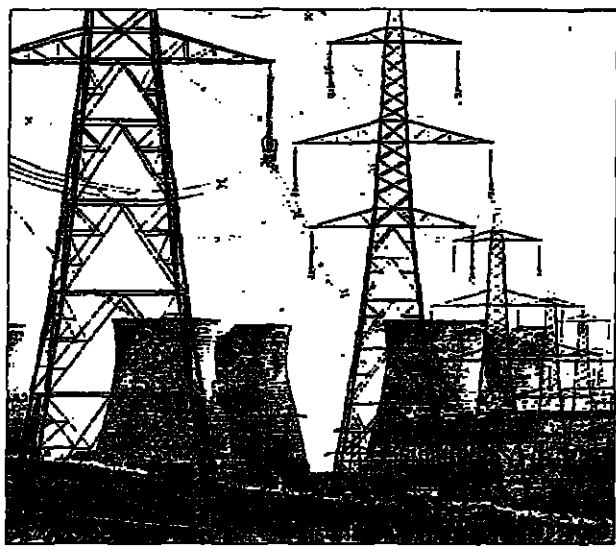
The FT-All Share Index, consisting of the top 850 companies, ended 0.2 per cent lower on the day at 1,945.10. Brokers pointed to heavy turnover in shares of the large utilities for FT-SE 100 upturn. It seems fund managers have shrugged off their worries about a Labour Government imposing a windfall tax and, instead, have chosen to increase their weightings in the shares. Some brokers were casting doubt on the legality of such a tax being imposed. Others pointed out that Labour first had to win the general election.

Short covering by traders wishing to close positions before Tuesday's speech also fuelled yesterday's rise together with stock shortages and heavy turnover on the futures market.

One leading broker said: "The Chancellor has about £3 billion to give away. Anything less than that would boost the gilt market and that would feed through to equities."

Leading the utilities higher was again Railtrack after interim figures earlier this week and a clutch of buy recommendations from brokers. The price jumped 20p to a new high of 374p on turnover of more than 16 million shares. This compares with the 190p at which they were floated off in the summer.

After interim figures on Thursday, British Energy was another firm market, up 15p to 150p, with more than 18 million shares traded. Elsewhere in the electricity sector, London rose 6p to 669p. National Power 19p to 471p. PowerGen 11p to 500p. Scottish Hydro 7p to 315p and Yorkshire 12p to 77p. Southern Electric rose 3p to 700p before figures due next week, as did National Grid.



A good trading day sparked rises in the power sector

ending 7p better at 194p. Among better water companies, Anglian Water rose 10p to 583p. Severn Trent, reporting next week, rose 10p to 672p. Thames Water 5p to 579p and United Utilities 7p to 607p ahead of interim figures also next week. Other privatised shares to go better included British Gas, 9p to 231p and BT 11p to 368p.

Jarvis closed just a shade below its peak of 135p, with a rise of 15p to 134p. There has been no looking back for the group since it bought British Rail's Northern Infrastructure Mainline division, the price having risen from just 20p. Whispers of a bid for Jarvis are doing the rounds.

Speculative buying was good for Imperial Group, up 7p to 368p. Merrill Lynch, the broker, is telling the clients that the shares should be bought up to the 400p level. Bid talk was also good for EMI, up 25p to £13.37p, and Enterprise Oil, 30p better at 570p. But oil shares were firm generally, with BP 18p stronger at 690p and Shell 17p at 998p.

News of a bid approach from an unidentified suitor lifted Berisford, the kitchen furniture and Magnet joinery group, 30p to 151p. Top of the list of likely suitors is Wassall, the fast growing industrial conglomerate, and Electrolux last year for control of Welbilt. Brokers said they were looking for a bid of anywhere between 150p and 200p a share for Berisford.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current price	Week's change	Notes
Forward Group	+168p	Profits warning
Vanguard Media	+57p	+47p on private treatment phase 3 trials
London Electricity	+69p	Speculative buying
Povair	+24p	Second profits warning
Country Casuals	+77p	Profits warning
Railtrack	+37p	+51p on buy recommendations
NSM	+30p	Losses forecast
Fine Art Developments	+28p	Profits warning
Home Counties	+24p	Profits warning

The shares firmed 2p to 170p.

A profits warning from Fine Art Developments left the shares nursing a fall of 17p to 262p. Retail analyst Nick Bubb at Macclesfield has slashed his pre-tax profit forecast for the current year from £47 million to £32 million.

Home Counties News ended the week on a flat note with a fall of 21p to 240p also after issuing a profits warning. The group expects pre-tax drop from £1.7 million to £800,000 and blames a price war in one of its main areas.

Shares of Osborne & Little, the furnishings retailer, ended their recent strong run with a 92p fall to 842p.

Shares in AIM-listed Rushmore Wynne were suspended at 2p pending an announcement. Earlier this week the group said it was expecting a loss in the 10 months to September following the disposal of HS Printers.

A joint venture between Cowie, the bus operator, and the management of Thameslink Rail has been shortlisted for the franchise of that part of the railway network. Cowie responded with a rise of 6p to 36p.

Moran Holdings, the plantations group, held steady at 41p after pegging the dividend at 0.5p, having seen a drop in pre-tax profit last year from £622,000 to £306,000.

BTG recovered an early fall to close all square at £25.37 before figures due next month. Brokers say the figures should impress and are hoping for some bullish news accompanying the figures.

GILT EDGED: The London bond market continued to extend the week's gains. The strength of sterling continued to underpin the market, with investors also hoping for a tight fiscal Budget on Tuesday. Prices ticked better throughout the morning in reasonable volume. The December series of the Long Gilt was seven ticks better at £110.93, while a total of 51,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 rose £1.32 to £193.52. At the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £7.32 better at £103.72.

NEW YORK: US shares were higher at midday, with the Dow Jones Industrial average showing a rise of 27.20 points to 6,445.68.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6,445.68 (+27.20)
S&P Composite 746.18 (+3.43)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 2121.11 (+27.77)
Hang Seng 13116.79 (+17.23)

Amsterdam:
E0E Index 615.47 (+7.23)
AO 2383.1 (+9.1)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2763.69 (+8.65)
FTSE 100 4018.7 (+64.9)

Singapore:
Straits 2194.75 (+2.94)

Brussels:
General 10294.99 (+1.23)
CAC-40 2555.47 (+21.90)

Zurich:
SIX Index 823.80 (+6.03)

London:
FT 30 2810.5 (+35.3)
FT 100 4018.7 (+64.9)
FTSE Mid 250 441.3 (+14.3)

FTSE 350 1997.1 (+26.7)
FTSE 100 4018.7 (+64.9)
FT All-Share 1835.10 (+8.01)

FT 100 Financials 206.25 (+26.09)
FT 100 Industrials 116.95 (+1.19)
FT 100 Services 94.79 (+0.33)

Bargains 420.1
SEAG Volume 878.4M
USM (Dow Jones) 199.54 (+1.18)

US 1801 (+0.05)
German Mark 2.524 (-0.0072)
Exchange Index 92.5 (+0.3)

Bank of England official base rate 6.00%
RPI 153.8 Oct (2.7%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX 153.8 Oct (3.3%) Jan 1987=100

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Lotus Road (72)	70
Majestic Wines	220
Mears Group	11
Oriental Restaurants	233
Provent	12
Scot Highland Hls	138
Second David Res	9
Second David Res	9
Snakeboard (3)	3

RIGHTS ISSUES

AG Hldgs n/p (134)	10
Acadian Int n/p (45)	2
Bridport-Gun n/p	1
Capital Shop 0.25 n/p	1
More Group n/p (600)	27
Springwood n/p	74
Siskis n/p (82)	6
Vision Grp n/p (125)	63

MAJOR CHANGES

RISER:	254p (+19p)
Planned	167p (+10p)
First Bus	220p (+12p)
First Bus	186p (+10p)
Scotia	590p (+20p)
Gearhouse Group	297p (+10p)
Rank Grp	415p (+12p)
AG Hldgs	786p (+20p)
FALLS:	
Haynes Pub	287p (-30p)
Home Counties	240p (-21p)
Meyer Int	381p (-11p)
Johnson Math	538p (-10p)
Asian	617p (-7p)
Janis Patis	224p (-6p)

Closing Prices Page 47

A Magnet for a bid

IF THERE were no signs of relief from the Berisford camp yesterday but there should have been. The tentative interest reported is not yet a bid. But it was sufficiently like a bid to get the Berisford share price moving, and to disarm, at least temporarily, a few irritable shareholders who have been tossing firecrackers under the chair of Alan Bowkett, the chief executive.

Berisford also had some good things to report after the recent round of strikes at Magnet and slowdowns in the US business. Magnet's sales fell in the first half of the year, but picked up sharply in the second half, and are now running at double-digit levels with the strike-ridden Dartington factory shifting its product. Even Welbilt, the American company that builds fryers for fast-food chains, is looking a bit healthier, although its

core US sales are still in the doldrums. Yet without the hint of a bid, improved trading might not have been enough to lift Berisford's rating in the short term.

The company is loaded with cash and until yesterday was planning to use some of it to buy back part of a £200 million issue of convertible loan stock. That project has been postponed: the company would have found the same money on loan-stock holders until the mystery bidder had indicated a price.

With underperforming businesses and £500 million in the bank, Berisford is clearly vulnerable. Even after yesterday's news the company is valued at nine times forecast earnings. A bid at £2 would probably knock out Berisford and rescue one man's track record, but if the bidder goes away institutions could be on the warpath again.

GWR

FOR GWR, the easy part is over. Since its 1994 flotation, the company has charged about buying radio stations, concluding with the purchase of Classic FM. The acquisition frenzy has, however, brought GWR up against its permitted market share limit in Britain. Having shown that it can play the City game, the company must now prove that it can manage businesses. Margins of 18 per cent are ripe for improvement; its best stations achieve 30 per cent.

Cost-cutting, including a round of redundancies after completion of the Classic FM merger, will push GWR towards its goal, but that alone will not be enough. Stations need to be re-launched and promoted, and the portfolio, which cannot increase in size, must be

IMPROVING THE HOME SERVICE

made to generate more cash. Weak stations need to be shed and replaced with profitable ones or those with potential. Timing is crucial. Swings in the advertising cycle can make or break a struggling radio station.

GWR could become dull while the portfolio is being juggled: the company will have little time to deal with

expansion abroad. The risk, of course, is that competitors, such as CLT, will snap up the bargains in far-flung markets while GWR is concentrating on the home market. However, GWR has little choice. Allowing its domestic business to drift could leave the company exposed to the acquisitive gaze of bigger fish.

Fine Art

PRICING Fine Art Developments has never been an easy task, but yesterday's profit warning reinforces just how difficult the business can be.

For one thing, the company is a hybrid mix of mail order sales, on the one hand, and direct and wholesale card and stationery sales, on the other. More important, the catalogue operation itself, which historically accounts for around half of group sales, has a peak season of just eight weeks, which leaves little room for manoeuvre. Given both those facts, it is perhaps not surprising that the company's shares have traded at a discount of around 20 per cent to the retail sector.

Although some believe that yesterday's warning could have been given earlier — a point hotly disputed by the management — the share price fall could have been worse. A 40 per cent plunge was only a few points above

the downgrade in broker's profit forecasts, from £40 million to between £30 million and £32 million. That said, the current price leaves the company vulnerable. While its own plans include further disposals — the retail chain, PaperTree, being an obvious candidate — it may find that bigger retailers have their own ideas for Fine Art Developments. Gossip has Great Universal Stores and N Brown as potential predators.

Minerva

WHY IS Minerva being sold at a 15 per cent discount to net worth? The company completed its £75 million placing yesterday, apparently without a hitch, at 150p a share. Yet the property valuation gives a net asset value for Minerva, including the money raised, of 176p a share and the average discount to NAV for quoted property companies is less than 1 per cent.

Development companies

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LIFFE		CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)		GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES	
Dec	99.82	Mar	100.10	Dec	99.75
Mar	99.82	Jun	100.10	Mar	99.75
Jun	99.82	Sep	100.10	Jun	99.75
Sep	99.82	Dec	100.10	Sep	99.75
Dec	99.82	Mar	100.10	Dec	99.75

ROBUSTA (COFFEE B)		SUGAR (CANE)		COTTON (LINT)	
Jan	127.42	Jan	127.42	Jan	127.42
Feb	127.42	Feb	127.42	Feb	127.42
Mar	127.42	Mar	127.42	Mar	127.42
Apr	127.42	Apr	127.42	Apr	127.42
May	127.42	May	127.42	May	127.42

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION		LONDON METAL EXCHANGE	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

LIFFE OPTIONS		GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)		OTHER STERLING	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

FSE VOLUDES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

WALL STREET		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

DOLLAR RATES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

WALL STREET		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

DOLLAR RATES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

WALL STREET		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

DOLLAR RATES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

WALL STREET		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

DOLLAR RATES		WALL STREET	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

WALL STREET		DOLLAR RATES	
Dec	100.10	Dec	100.10
Jan	100.10	Jan	100.10
Feb	100.10	Feb	100.10
Mar	100.10	Mar	100.10
Apr	100.10	Apr	100.10

Series Jan Apr Jul Jan Apr Jul						FTSE INDEX (%12)						Tarmac					
LAT Ind ...						100 200 4000 4050 4100 4150						---					
420 38. 40 54 41 15 20												80 9 12 13 04 14 21					
460 14. 26 33 20 36 41												(199) 40 20. 48 31 9 7					
240 18. 26 30 51 9 12												Hilldown ... 160 14. 19 20 0 2 6					
												(112) 180 2 7 9 7 11 19					

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More on the perils of cohabitation

WEEKEND MONEY

FLAT PACK 39

Leaseholders decide to stand their ground

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Clarke will keep an eye focused on the ballot box

Anne Ashworth and Marianne

Curphey look forward to the Budget and give their views on the Chancellor's strategy in the run-up to the election

As he opens the Budget box, wooden, lined with leather and made for Mr Gladstone around 1860, Kenneth Clarke will have his mind on the ballot box. Indeed, some believe that he will be so eager to persuade the electorate that Labour is the party of high taxation that he will aim any tax cuts more towards the better paid than those in lower income groups.

This would force Labour to either vote against the measures, or abstain, so revealing themselves as supporters of onerous taxes. One accountant commented: "If ordered to abstain on tax cuts, Labour's hard Left would go ballistic and raise a rumpus — exactly what the Conservatives want."

Despite this week's announcement of an increase in tax receipts, leading to an unexpected £4.4 billion repayment of public borrowing, the Chancellor is still expected to produce a tight Budget without too many generous giveaways.

However, to reassure the nation that the much-debated 20 per cent rate of basic tax is still in sight, Roger Bootle, chief economist of the HSBC Group and one of the Six Wise Men and Women who advise the Chancellor, believes that Mr Clarke may reveal a rolling programme of tax decreases. Mr Bootle said: "He could readily announce a 20p standard rate of tax for the year 2000."

One group hoping that the Chancellor will not be too open-handed are retailers. Although you might suppose that they would wish for free-spending customers, many stores are privately admitting that this Christmas stocks are insufficient to satisfy demand from customers who suddenly feel richer. Although consumers would not feel the benefit of any tax cuts until next April, experience shows that shoppers start flashing their credit cards in anticipation of decreases.

Amidst not to put pressure on inflation, Mr Clarke may leave unchanged, or even cut, duty on beer, spirits and wine after his decision in last year's Budget to cut spirits duty by 27p and freeze duty on beer and wine. However, it is

rumoured that there will be heavier duty on "alcopops" such as Two Dogs, Hooch, Bacardi Breezer and Thirsthead, the teenagers' favourite tipple.

These potent drinks come in various strengths, but the duty on an average can be 13.9p, lower than on most ciders.

Last year, Mr Clarke added 8p to the duty on strong cider, arguing that it was under-rated.

For a second year, Mr Clarke is rumoured to be about to impose higher taxes on travel and insurance, although he may dodge the thorny topic of long-term care, as we explain below.

■ The travel industry is bracing itself for Air Passenger Duty (APD) to double. Like insurance premium tax, this is seen as a "soft target" which is almost unnoticed by consumers and raises considerable funds for the Treasury.

Introduced in the Budget of November 1994, APD was dubbed the "exit tax" and stunned the travel industry, which had believed it had seen off the threat of VAT on air fares. The tax is paid by all air travellers on scheduled and charter airlines leaving and entering the UK. It came into force on October 1 last year.

At present, the tax is £5

within the UK and from the UK to Europe, except Switzerland, where the duty is £10. Further afield, the rate is £10. Observers believe these rates could double to £10 and £20.

The duty, levied when the airline ticket is purchased, raises around £325 million a year. When the tax was first introduced, British Airways said it was "acting as a tax collector for the Government".

Most airlines and travel companies claim to have absorbed a proportion of the tax to keep down prices, but they have given warning that they can no longer continue to do this, and if the rate is increased it will have an impact on fares.

■ If the Chancellor moves to increase insurance premium tax, the average motorist could have to pay up to £30 more on a £350 car insurance policy in the next few months. Young drivers and those in professions considered high risk could face even more expensive premiums.

Insurers are already predicting rises of around 5 per cent in the first three months of next year as a result of increased claims. They say the burden faced by drivers will be even greater if the Chancellor more than doubles insur-

ance premium tax (IPT) to 6 per cent. This will add £10 to the average motor policy, on top of the 5 per cent premium rise equivalent to around £18.

Although motor and household insurance policies have been falling steadily over the past few years and are now around 30 per cent lower than in 1993, insurers say premiums are likely to rise by March because they are losing money on the business they write. This would coincide with the new, higher rate of IPT from the beginning of the new financial year on April 1.

Insurance premium tax applies to most general insurance and currently stands at 2.5 per cent. Rumours are rife that it will be increased to 6 per cent, which would raise £1 billion extra for the Government.

Many people in the industry believe Mr Clarke would like to turn IPT into VAT, thereby taxing insurance at 17.5 per cent. This would bring Britain into line with Europe, Canada and the United States, where general insurance is taxed at between 4 per cent and 5 per cent. Policyholders in France face the biggest duties on motor insurance, 35 per cent, while those in Italy pay up to 21 per cent.

■ The Chancellor is likely to put aside the thorny issue of how the State will pay for long-term care until after the Budget. Originally, proposals were expected to be drawn up before the Budget, but a Green Paper on the subject received a far cooler reception than had been expected.

A White Paper on long-term care is imminent and is expected to propose a "partnership scheme" whereby people are encouraged to buy insurance cover to pay for nursing home care and, in return, can ring-fence a proportion of their assets from being means tested. The Government may offer to disregard £150 or £2 worth of assets for every £1 of insurance cover that a person buys.

There is an outside chance that Mr Clarke will announce a scheme to help people to release equity from their pensions, but most observers believe that he will reserve a decision on the partnership scheme until after the Budget.

Continued on page 34, col 1

For the best coverage and analysis of the Chancellor's speech and what it means for the economy, business, your tax bill and the 1997 general election, read Budget '96, a 12-page supplement in *The Times* on Wednesday. For more details on the effect on savings and investments, read the *Weekend Money Guide to the Budget* next Saturday.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

City in technology time warp

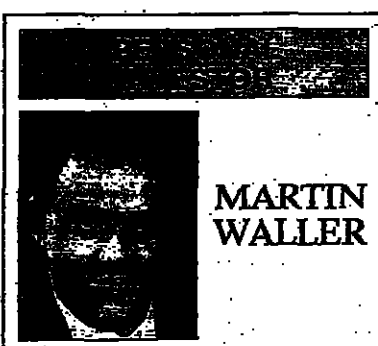
The City, as we all know, is a go-ahead, progressive sort of place, staying at the cutting edge of technological change to keep ahead of other world financial centres. It must be competitive or they wouldn't pay themselves such huge salaries, would they?

Not true. The Square Mile is way behind in one crucial area, and that is the technology City folk use to transact their day-to-day business. Those high-tech trading screens we have all seen on television in 1980s red-bricks dramas now look as dated as *Brief Encounter*, but the system used to shift the ownership of shares from one person or institution to another is still stuck in the age of the quill pen.

The latest attempt to move it into the second half of the 20th century is heading for the crunch — as soon as the day after tomorrow. The plan has been to convert share transfers by next April from a system based on writing on pieces of paper to one that does the job electronically. That deadline now looks impossible to meet.

Extraordinary, really, that the City should be so far behind. Nearly everyone today is paid by direct, electronic transfer into their accounts. On the high street, retailers have almost entirely converted to electronic transfer of money via credit cards, Switch or other competing but compatible systems.

You can still write a letter, but there is the fax machine or, for the initiated, e-mail. But if you want to sell some shares, then out comes the pen and paper. Ownership is still conveyed by the share certificate, a highly perishable commod-



MARTIN WALLER

ity that is easily lost or stolen. The last attempt to switch to electronic trading ended in grief three years ago, when the £75 million Taurus system fell apart. This cost the job of the chief executive of the Stock Exchange, and the next attempt was taken away from that body and given to a new, bespoke company set up by the Bank of England but owned by the financial institutions.

Crest is the name of the new system, and CrestCo that company. Currently about a quarter of London stocks are dealt electronically through Crest. Its board meets on Monday to consider whether the timetable should be extended beyond April. The reason is — and this will surprise no one who has had anything to do with the installation of new computers — that the system has developed glitches and delays.

Just how bad the trouble is, and who is to blame, is not clear. There are suggestions that small, private-client stockbrokers are using cheap new tech-

nology. Some big City firms are blaming CrestCo and urging a delay. Some want external consultants to conduct an expensive audit of the system.

CrestCo says the software problems are now resolved — at its end. The board must decide, first, if this is so, and second, if the market operators, brokers and other financial institutions can cope at their end. The disadvantage to an extension in the timetable is money — the system costs a little short of £2 million a month to operate, and extra costs will be incurred by the market as a whole for every month it runs in parallel with the current paper trading system that Crest is designed to supersede.

Two parties might be allowed a degree of *Schadenfreude* here.

One is the Stock Exchange, viewing the troubles of the company set up to do the job at which it failed. The second is the private investor. The present system contains a degree of cross-subsidy whereby the cost to the latter is in part borne by the big City traders. Remove this, and there are fears that fees to small shareholders might have to rise. CrestCo says not. Several brokers serving the private investor have already said their fees will be held. Such competition should hold down prices, even if investors may need to shop around and not necessarily stick with their existing brokers.

The hope must be that CrestCo will opt for a delay on Monday, whatever the loss of face. Having pushed for such a course of action, the City can hardly complain at the extra cost.



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	Building Society	£6,000
INCOME	M&G Corporate Bond PEP	£1,074
	Building Society	£809

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POSTCODE		
KC-NFACTZ		

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The M&G Corporate Bond PEP

Clarke will keep an eye focused on ballot box

Continued from page 33
scheme until the new year. Currently, single pensioners with assets of between £10,000 and £16,000 have to contribute towards nursing care, while those with assets of more than £16,000 — including their homes — have to meet the full bill.

These limits were increased in last April's Budget after Mr Clarke bowed to pressure from charities and pensioners' groups and raised from £3,000 to £10,000 the threshold above which people must make a contribution towards their own care, and from £8,000 to £16,000 the limit above which they must meet the costs entirely themselves.

But the regulations are still criticised for penalising pensioners who save.

Caroline Merrell on Budget hopes for the tax reform measures

The Revenue moves

Accountants are hoping that the Chancellor will announce measures to ease the introduction of the self-assessment system, the draconian reform of the income tax system now beginning to be implemented.

Under the rules, nine million higher-rate taxpayers and self-employed people will be required to calculate their own tax liabilities, with high penalties for late delivery of returns. It is feared that unless the Chancellor moves to simplify some tax rules making the completion of the lengthy self-assessment returns easier that chaos will result. There is concern that few understand the implications of the new rules and the burden they will impose on small businesses and those with complex tax affairs.

Deloitte Touche has, for example, suggested that the Chancellor should amend the capital gains tax regulations, abolishing the need for taxpayers to declare proceeds of less than £10,000 in total on their

returns. Others recommend that the Chancellor should waive — for one year only — the penalties for dilatory returns that become payable if the form is only a day late. But others say he wants taxpayers to take self-assessment seriously from the outset.

Meanwhile, the system is starting to make its presence felt. In the next few weeks, about 1.6 million people can expect an early Christmas present in the form of a statement of account from the Inland Revenue — the first missive in the new regime. Those receiving this letter from the Revenue will be mainly the self-employed, partners and ordinary higher-rate taxpayers who will not get the form.

These statements of account will give an estimate of the tax bill for the 1996 to 1997 tax year. This bill will be due in two instalments next year — half will need to be paid at the end of January, with the other half due in July of next year. The Revenue has emphasised

that these bills are only an estimate based on the previous year's tax assessment. Every one will have an opportunity to object to the Revenue's estimation of the tax due.

For instance, many people will be in the process of appealing against their 1995-96 tax bill, or they may have different allowances because they have married or earn less — all these things could be taken into account in the tax-reduction form which will be sent with the statements of account.

John Whiting, head of personal tax at Price Waterhouse, said: "Like everything from the Revenue, these statements need to be checked. The amounts the Revenue may be asking for may not be right — taxpayers can claim to reduce the amounts or sometimes more may be due. Care is needed, because just like the credit card statement, interest will start to run if you don't get the proper payments in on time."

Accountants will also be getting details of what the Revenue believes their clients should pay. However, these will not be in the same form as the statements of account received by the taxpayers themselves. It is important that those in receipt of a letter from the Revenue show it to their accountant, if they have one.

The actual amount of tax due for the 1996 to 1997 tax year will be worked out using the self-assessment form which will be sent out in April of next year. The Revenue has finally settled on the form's layout after two revisions and it has been extensively piloted in Leicester.

At first many people had difficulty in understanding it. Many complained that it had too many sections which were unrelated to their own particular needs.

Taxpayers will have to show all their income, expenses and any capital gains they have made over the previous 12 months in the form. They must then return it by September to the Revenue, if they want it to work out the bill, and by January the following year if their accountant is working it out for them, or if they are working it out for themselves. Obviously, under this system, there is considerable scope for underpayment and overpayment of tax.

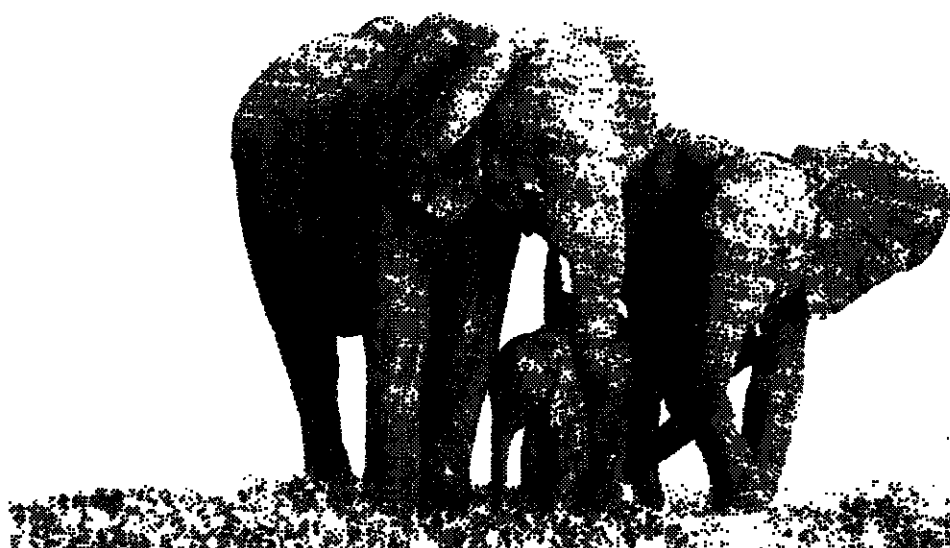
The Inland Revenue has also issued guidelines about how interest on overpayments is to be assessed. The Revenue proposes that interest on overpayment will run from the date at which the tax payment was made, as opposed to when the tax was due. The interest from January 1997 will be set at 6.25 per cent.

Mr Whiting said: "We will be cross-checking to make sure that clients comply with their responsibilities. People do need to take the statements seriously. Like the credit card balance, interest can be added for late payment."



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Chance to make a lasting impression with investors

Kenneth Clarke is unlikely to go down in history as a creator of popular investment schemes. His only contribution to date is the corporate bond personal equity plan, a sub-species of the PEP, an investment dreamt up by Lord Lawson of Blaby, during his spell as Chancellor. John Major can claim credit for the invention of the tax exempt special savings account (Tessa).

However, Mr Clarke now has the chance to have his name attached to an acronym: the Oeic (Open-Ended Investment Company), a new, simpler type of investment fund. All he has to do is to abolish the stamp duty charged on the

buying and selling of units in unit trusts.

For years investors in unit trusts and investment trusts have struggled with the complexities of dual pricing: the arcane process whereby fund managers and market-makers sell units and shares at high offer prices and buy back from other investors at a lower bid price. In between has lain the "spread", an uneasy no man's land for the investor, which varies according to how much profit investment companies think they can make.

Oeics will have a single price. However, their development is being hampered by stamp duty, a point that has been made to the Chancellor.

The Oeic is a hybrid of the investment trust and the unit trust. Like an investment trust it will be a company with shares listed on the London Stock Exchange and will invest in the shares of other companies, gilt-edged stocks and other bonds.

Like a unit trust, the Oeic is open-ended (the managers can create as many holdings as they like in response to demand) and its share capital will rise and fall with investor demand. Unlike either, it will have a single price. Investors will buy and sell at the same price, and any charges levied by the fund managers will be clearly set out.

Since the 1850s the Treasury has levied a 0.5 per cent stamp duty on all transactions in stocks and shares. For complex reasons, this has come to include some of the deals in units within unit trusts. Investors have not noticed the charge because it has fallen within the spread.

However, the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (Autif) believes the inconsistency in the application of stamp duty will harm the growth of single-priced Oeics, particularly those which adopt a no-charge

structure. As the rules stand, investors in Oeics will buy shares more cheaply on days when stamp duty has not been paid (it is not invariably applied).

Autif wants the Treasury to solve the problem by abolishing stamp duty within open-ended funds altogether. It argues that the Treasury would lose only £20 million in revenue and that unit trusts and Oeics would continue to pay stamp duty on the transactions in their underlying assets.

Supporters of Oeics argue that it will provide good value for investors. Single pricing, combined with increased competition amongst investment companies, should push down initial charges towards 3 per cent, although many houses will recoup this by edging up annual fees.

Shares in investment trusts tend to fall to large discounts to their net asset value (the true worth of the assets they hold) as they fall in and out of favour with investors. Shares in Oeics will rise and fall like any other share, but their price will be calculated daily on the basis of the fund's net asset value, not in response to market demand.

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Self-assessment crucial for Kenneth

Kenneth Clarke will this weekend allow himself a wry smile at the expense of the Budget prediction industry, now hitting its annual production high in an attempt to second-guess the contents of the battered red box.

Slipping off the second-best Health Puppies to relax for a moment and to nibble a Hobnob, or half a packet, Mr Clarke will reflect on the ingenious measure that he has included in his speech. A rule change or innovation so subtle that it could not have been predicted by even the most skilled team of crystal ball-gazing economists.

If his thoughts also turn to how these same economists will pass judgement on his term as Chancellor, then he must ensure that this top-secret provision, or some other Budget amendment, will do something to smooth the introduction of self-assessment. Otherwise, history



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

will record that Mr Clarke failed properly to manage the largest single reform to the income tax system since its beginnings two centuries ago.

Self-assessment will require nine million taxpayers to calculate their own tax liabilities, suffering severe penalties for the late submission of returns or other falls from fiscal grace. The arrival of statements of account from the Inland Revenue this month will be, for many thousands, the first suggestion that

anything has changed (see page 34).

The cavortings of Hector, the bowler-hatted taxman in the inadequate self-assessment advertising campaign, will have done little to alert taxpayers to their new responsibilities. For example, few of the self-employed suspect just how much self-assessment will increase their already considerable paperwork burden.

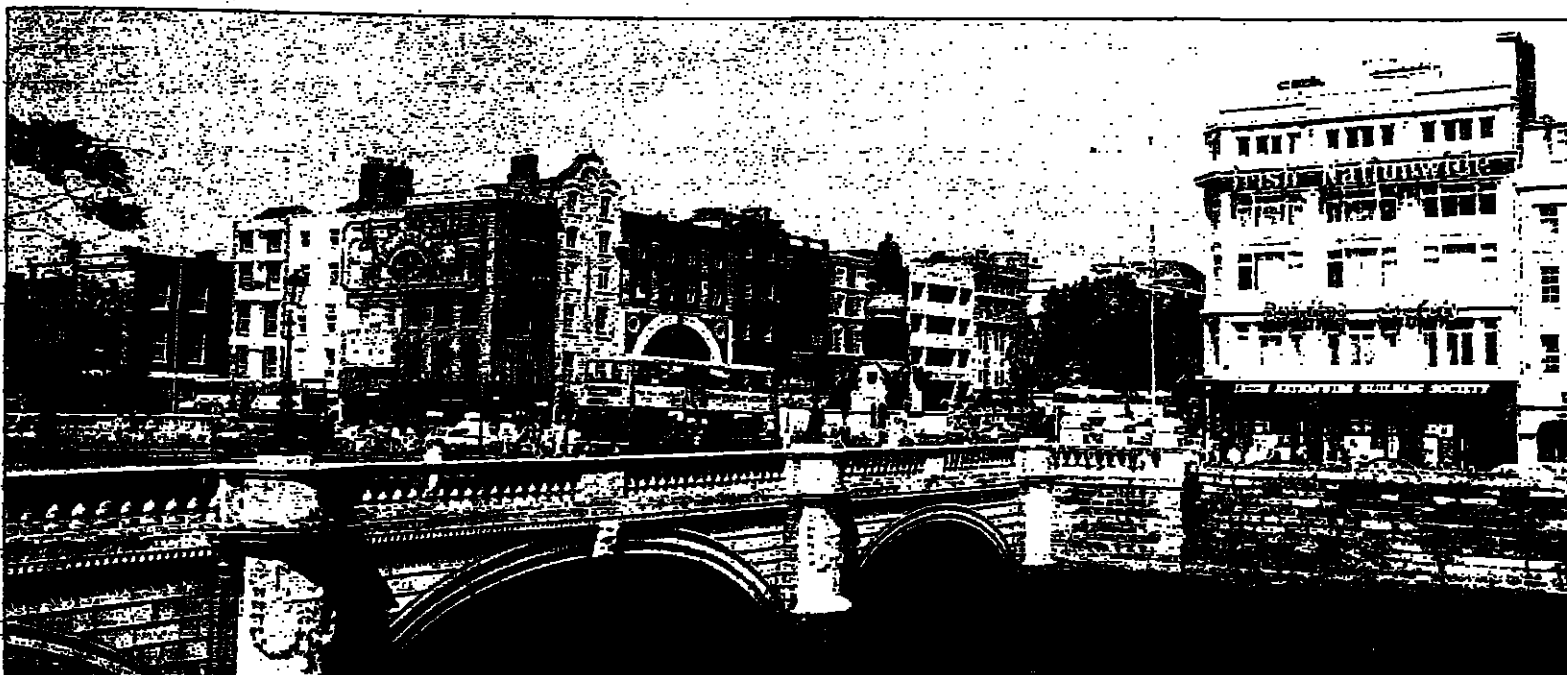
Accountants have suggested that the Chancellor could take a num-

ber of steps to make self-assessment work better. They include suspension of the late return penalties for one year only, radical simplification of capital gains tax or allowing taxpayers to make a single payment in settlement of their final liability, rather than the various instalments currently required.

During his time at the Treasury, Mr Clarke has preferred to create rather than abolish taxes. In this Budget, he should make the most lucrative tax more palatable.

Sinking feeling

NO building society could ensure that its conversion scheme kept all its savers happy. But anomalies thrown up by the Alliance & Leicester share scheme (see page 37) indicate that the current rules are fatally flawed and should be revised before any other society embarks on flotation.



If a flotation in Dublin beckons for customers of First National, those who transfer from C&G in Belfast will not be able to enjoy the benefits

Cheltenham & Gloucester customers are disgruntled at their enforced second-class status. With barely a whisper, the Belfast branch of the C&G has been acquired by First National, the Republic of Ireland's largest building society. Though customers can stay with C&G, through postal accounts, they are being encouraged to transfer to First National in time for the takeover on January 1.

Customers are currently receiving their transfer documents and are being asked to sign a declaration "on the understanding that this is a deposit account" carrying no membership or right to vote. That means should First National convert into a bank—and along with Irish Nationwide it has been rumoured to be following the Irish Permanent to the stock market—the ex-C&G customers would not be entitled to a conversion bonus.

"It would appear that First National would welcome C&G customers but not with a share account," says one unhappy Times reader. "And remember I have not applied to the First National, but am expected to contribute to this building society's business."

First National says the accounts it is taking over from

Switch from C&G causes anger

C&G are only deposit accounts. Tom Shinkwin, assistant general manager, said: "Once C&G became a bank there were only deposit accounts at the Belfast branch. Therefore, to avoid confusion, we are simply moving customers from one deposit account to another."

However, First National's actions would appear to contradict the sentiment of the revised Building Societies Act, to be released for consultation early next month. Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, has proposed that share accounts should be available to all new building society customers. First National offers deposit accounts only in

the UK. A spokeswoman for C&G says: "Customers already had a deposit account with us and they will not now be disadvantaged, unless the First National demutualises."

On the savings front, Leeds & Holbeck Building Society is bucking the trend with the launch of a new guaranteed bonus account. It gives instant access, but customers who make no withdrawals up to January 1, 1998, will get a bonus of 3 per cent, making 7 per cent on £100,000 and above. The rates for instant access are not good, but if you hold out for the bonus, they become competitive.

There is more activity offshore. First National, which has increasingly appeared in best-buy tables, has launched a 30-day notice account through its Guernsey subsidiary. The rates, from 6.5 per cent gross for the minimum balance of £10,000 to 6.75 per cent for £250,000 and over, are competitive for a notice account.

The Channel Islands subsidiary of the Portman has increased the rate on its one-year bond to 6.5 per cent gross and introduced a two-year bond paying 7 per cent. The minimum balance for both is £500.

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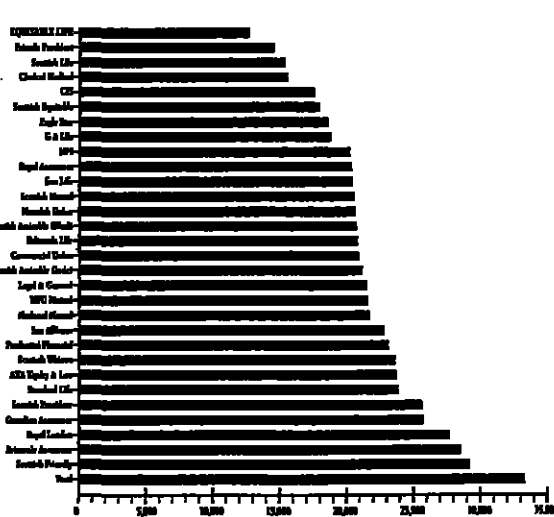
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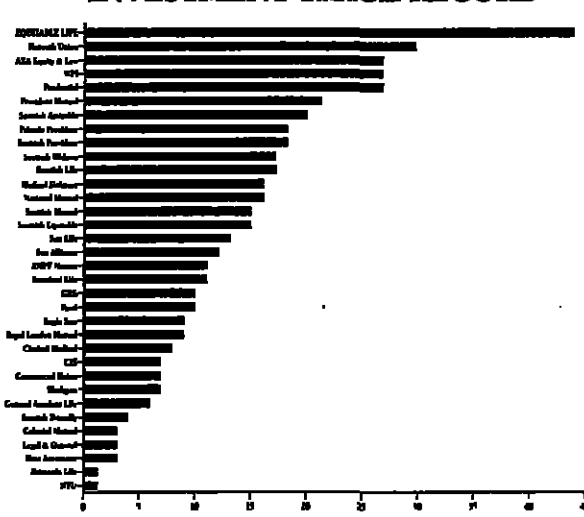
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The effect of charges

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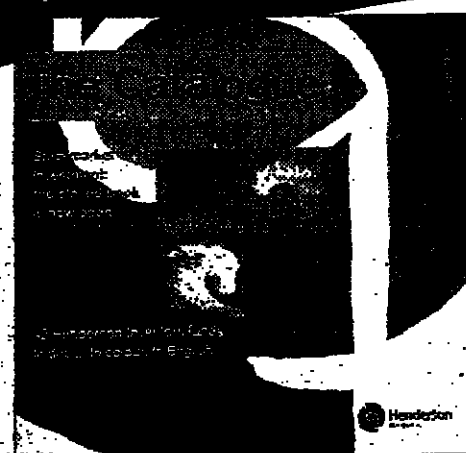
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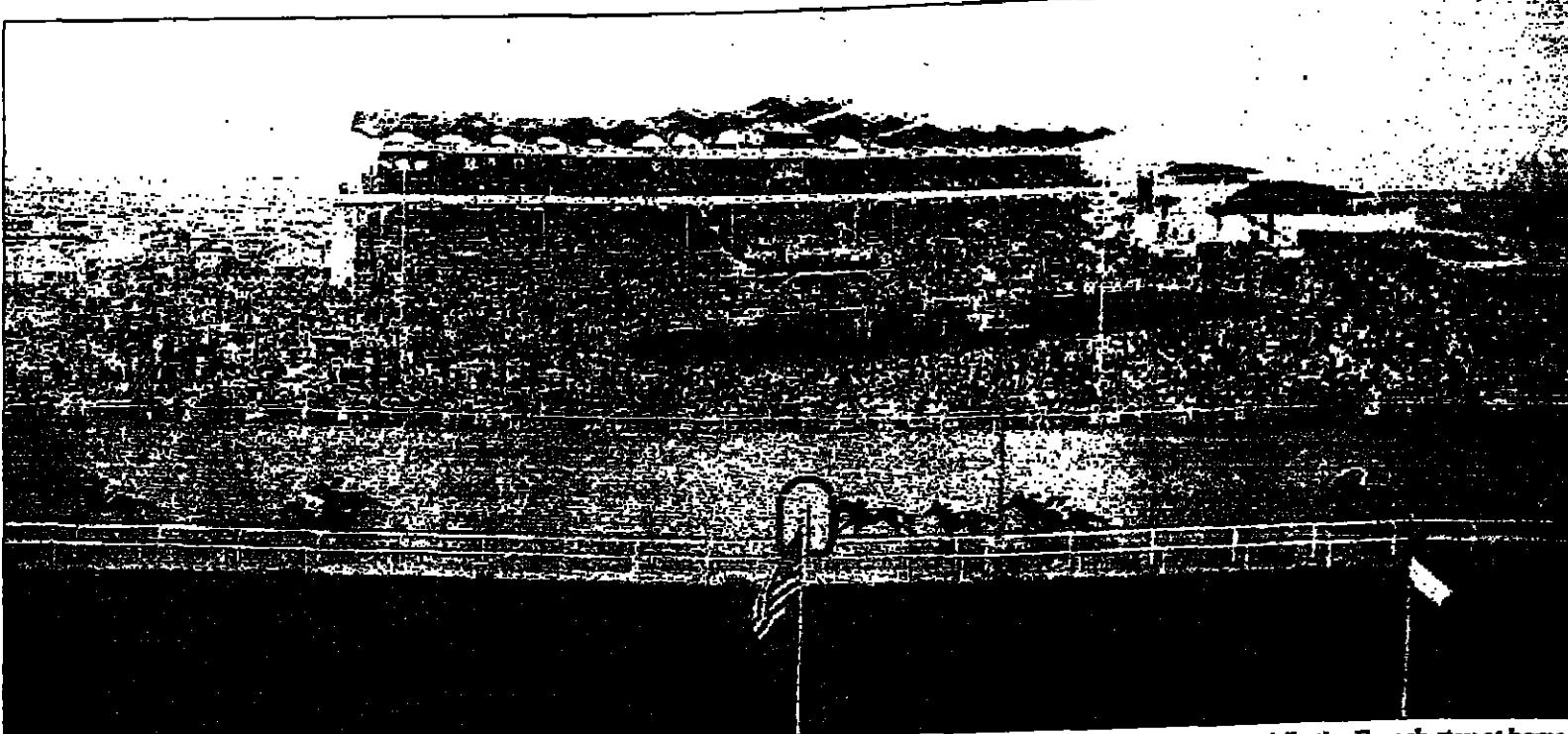

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Winning double: investors in Dubai will be able to put their Alliance & Leicester bonuses to good use at the racecourse while the French stay at home.

Locked-out investors baffled



The proposals for the flotation of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society continue to baffle many Times readers. Some feel they have been excluded from the payout because of an arbitrary set of rules which seem unrelated to their loyalty to the society.

Many who have held ac-

counts for years are aggrieved that they are being locked out of the bonanza, while carpet-baggers who joined the society just before, or just after, the end of last year will get the flat distribution of 250 shares, estimated to be worth in the region of £1,000.

Here we try to explain some of the exclusions:

Q Members living in France will be excluded from the payout, while those living in Germany, Belgium, Sweden and United Arab Emirates will not. Why?

A The Alliance & Leicester investigated the legal system for distributing shares in countries where it felt it had a material number of members. When it came to giving shares to members in France, the society found, after extensive contact with the relevant securities authorities and legal advisers, that it would be much too costly. These charges could easily wipe out any gains.

The society says there is still time to get round this exclusion by changing resident address within the next eight weeks. However, changing address could have other tax implications. Anyone considering doing so should get expert advice.

Q Many people will miss out on the flotation bonanzas because they allowed their accounts to slip below £100 on October 14 this year. Why is this amount important?

A Unlike other societies proposing flotation, when the Alliance & Leicester announced its float, with the first qualifying date on December 31, 1995, it said qualifying savers would be those who had a qualifying account open on that date. It was not necessary to have £100 in the account. However, the Building Societies Act stipulates that in order to vote, members must have £100 in their account at least 56 days before the vote, which is why accounts needed to be topped up by October 14.

Q Some members may be locked out of the payout because the first named on these accounts may also have another ac-

count with the society — they will get only one lot of shares. Is there any chance of reversing this decision?

A This problem is graphically illustrated by the Brighton and Worthing branch of the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust. The first named on the charity account, Leo van Buren, also has his own account in which he is the first named. Mr van Buren will be eligible for only one lot of shares. Equally unfair is the fact that many mentally handicapped and disabled will have trustees or guardians as the first named on their accounts — they too could find themselves locked out.

Some are claiming that this breaks the law, because it discriminates against the disabled. MPs have taken up the cudgels on behalf of the disabled, but no society has yet amended its plans.

Q Members aged under 18 will not be eligible for the shares, although they could be eligible for the cash bonus, which is expected to be around 11 per cent of the balances. Why?

A The society says that those under 18 are not eligible to vote on the flotation plans, which means they are not able to benefit from the shares.

Again this is a stipulation of the Act and is not particular to the Alliance & Leicester float. If the balance in accounts is high enough, the cash bonus could be worth more than the shares, at least in the beginning.

The share price has not yet been set — it will be set closer to the flotation date. At today's prices, the society estimates that shares should be worth around 435p. The shares, though, could rise in price. They could move to an instant premium because institutions need to get hold of stock.

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American Growth	+1130.9	1 out of 13	+120.7	AAA
Far Eastern Growth	+431.4	1 out of 14	+123.3	AAA
Japanese Growth	+173	13 out of 81	-	AA
European Growth	+178.2	4 out of 6	+80.5	AA
UK Growth	+335.9	1 out of 26	+107.5	AAA
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Sarah Anticoni concludes her two-part series on the perils of cohabitation

Don't be blinded by love



Unmarried couples like Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell should draw up a legally binding document setting out rights in relation to property and other assets

As professionals, not just doctors, have long espoused the benefits of preventive medicine rather than treating the symptoms when they arise, this message is most frequently delivered by lawyers advising clients who decide to cohabit rather than marry. While drawing up an agreement before living together might be seen to be unromantic, it is the most prudent of couples that tackle these issues at the outset before problems arise.

Of the million or so cohabiting couples in England and Wales, surprisingly few have taken the trouble to set out in a legally binding document their rights and obligations in relation to the property in which they live and any other assets they may have or acquire. This is usually because of the assumption that the law will protect them if anything goes wrong.

This is incorrect. Living together as man and wife does not mean that the laws relating to division of assets on the breakdown of a relationship are identical to those on divorce. They are not. Marriage gives a couple clearly defined rights, and the divorce procedure provides a framework in which the finances of the couple and arrangements for the children can be dealt with if they split. If the couple are not married, there is no such body of law upon which to rely.

Provided both parties take independent legal advice (or have the opportunity to do so) and both are aware of their respective financial positions before they enter into an agreement, a cohabitation agreement may provide reassurance and certainty to both parties.

Such an agreement can specify not only who should be paying what, and in what proportions, during the relationship, but it can also map out how to resolve practical issues that may arise when one or other of the parties wish to extricate themselves from the relationship.

The time and effort spent at the beginning of the relationship in tackling what will happen if that relationship

founders is usually rewarded with a significant reduction in future emotional turmoil and possible legal costs.

What goes into a cohabitation agreement very much depends on what the parties themselves wish to include. It is advisable to take legal advice to ensure that what has been agreed can be effected in law. Ideally, the document should be as comprehensive as possible while, at the same time, limiting the agreement and obligations to those things that a court would enforce. There is no point in detailing who is to wash the dishes on which night of the week.

The first step to creating a cohabitation agreement is for

the couple to discuss matters in order to clarify what they wish to achieve. These should include:

- Who owns the home, and what percentage?
- Who is to pay what outgoings, and from what source?
- Who is to have personal belongings brought to the relationship or acquired during the relationship?
- How would the home be sold, or could one or other party buy out the other?
- How would the home be valued if it was to be sold or bought out?
- If there is a dispute, should the couple mediate as a first step before legal proceedings?

However, cohabitation agreements are not the panacea for all ills. Consideration should also be given to providing life insurance to cover the financial consequences of the death of either partner. Similarly, it is worth investigating how pension benefits and life insurance policies could be written in trust, and the necessary documents should be drawn up.

To adjust the way in which your home is presently held may require a trust deed, and it is extremely important that each party makes a will. At present, the intestacy laws will help cohabitants only if they have lived together as husband and

wife for at least two years. If they have not, the surviving party will have to prove that he or she was financially dependent on the other partner immediately before his or her death.

Ideally, all these matters should be considered and documented before cohabitation begins, but it is possible to enter into an agreement later. In addition, the agreement can be altered or varied provided both parties agree. In any event, it should be reviewed periodically, especially when either party's financial situation changes significantly, such as when either party retires or when the couple decide to marry or have children.

Flexible loans point way for mortgages

LEGAL & GENERAL has brought out a simple, flexible mortgage that could become the blueprint for home loans in the future - and might do so, if business and street still long enough to watch what the opposition is doing.

The loan is a straightforward, variable-rate mortgage with the rate set at a competitive 6.24%, and a guarantee that it will never be more than 1.5 points above the bank base rate. The loan is set up on an interest-only basis, and any of the usual savings vehicles such as endowments, Peps or pensions, may be used to pay it off.

So far, no different, though it is pleasing to see that the loan has absolutely no strings in the shape of requirements to take Legal & General's own insurance policies or Peps, nor any early-redemption penalties. However, what makes the loan different is the flexibility offered over repayments of capital.

Borrowers can pay off lump sums at any time without penalty, or pay extra sums each month at any time (subject to a maximum of £50). An immediate adjustment will be made to the interest owing on the reduced debt. Further, the extra amounts repaid in this way can be placed into an "available reserve" which can then be borrowed back by the homeowner at any time, for any purpose.

The cost of this later borrowing will be the same as the rest of the mortgage. The only limitation is that the loan must remain at a minimum £30,000, otherwise there would be minor complications.

Such a scheme has two clear advantages. Many mortgage advisers say that borrowers are still reluctant to take on shorter-term mortgages because they are unsure at the outset how they will be able to manage with the new loan, especially when they have the additional costs of furnishing a new property.

But a year or two later, once things have settled down, they may well realise they could, indeed, afford higher sums, and thus shorten the overall term. Earlier "accelerated repayment" schemes have required a commitment from the borrower from the start, and consequently have not attracted many takers.

The second advantage, while not unique, shows up once again how building societies are behind the times: the fact that interest on small repayments is adjusted immediately rather than at the end of the lender's financial year.

And finally, for those who want to save ahead for some planned future expenses, making use of the available reserve feature is a very tax-efficient means.

Article written by Diana Wright, 22 OCTOBER 1995

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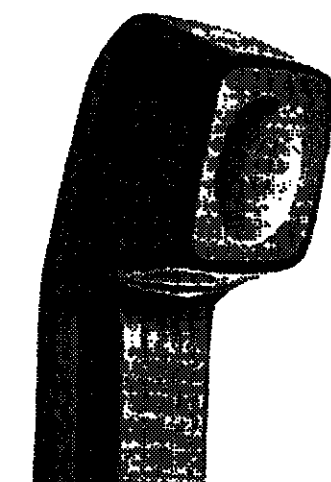
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Sara McConnell explains rights to 'reasonable' protection, and

Lessees must stand ground

Lessees of flats who are disputing "unreasonable" service charge bills should pay nothing and dare the landlord to take them to court, a packed meeting of leaseholders in Brighton heard this week.

Peter Haler, chief executive of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service (Leas), says new, strengthened laws will protect leaseholders from the threat of losing their homes for refusing to pay service charges they consider to be unreasonable.

He told hundreds of leasees at the Brighton council-sponsored meeting at Hove Town Hall: "You need not pay anything that you dispute. Your landlord cannot repossess until and unless the courts judge the charges to be unreasonable."

Many leaseholders at the meeting alleged that their freeholders were attempting to pressure them into paying high service charges by threatening them with eviction.

The Times has uncovered widespread evidence of similar practices in other parts of the UK, particularly London and along the South Coast.

Some landlords are demanding payment from flatowners on long leases for repairs and services which they say either have not been carried out or have been shoddily effected at high cost. Refusal to pay is countered with a notice threatening eviction.

Among the complainants

were some of those whose freeholds are owned by Adelaide Homes, based in Hove.

This summer the Government moved to close the loophole whereby landlords could follow up a service charge demand with an eviction notice. Now the landlord must go to court to prove that the charges are reasonable. Only if the court decides they are can landlords serve notices on anyone refusing to pay.

But Mr Haler gave warning that any strategy of non-payment would depend on

New law puts boot on the other foot, and onus is on the landlord to justify the charges

landlords not paying the service charge on the leaseholder's behalf and adding it to the mortgage.

Some lenders are still yielding to pressure from landlords to pay up because they are frightened of losing the property on which their loan is secured. Leaseholders often do not find out until later that their lender has paid a disputed service charge. By the time they do they have lost their chance to challenge the charges. The Council of Mort-

gage Lenders has told lenders that their security should be protected under the new rules because landlords could not immediately repossess.

But he added: "You can never say adding arrears to the mortgage debt has disappeared. There could be circumstances when the society is in danger."

Other leasehold reform campaigners and solicitors agreed cautiously with Mr Haler that leaseholders were now on much stronger ground if they withheld disputed charges.

But Peter Ward, partner at Trowers and Hamlin, a firm of solicitors, said: "The new law puts the boot on the other foot, and the onus is on the landlord to justify the charges. But you should look at each case on its merits."

Lessees could, for example, find themselves liable for interest on service charges if the charges were judged reasonable by the court, said Mr Ward. The other danger for leaseholders is that a new system of cheaper, fixed-fee leasehold valuation tribunals for hearing service charge disputes will not be in operation until April next year.

Until then, the existing system of hearing disputes in the county court will apply. The Department of the Environment has confirmed. This means that if the landlord wins a dispute, leaseholders may face paying his costs as well as their own.



Freeholder: the offices of Adelaide Homes in Hove

Code of conduct forces agents to come clean

A new code of conduct published this week ensures that landlords and managing agents will, for the first time, have to reveal what commission they are receiving for arranging buildings insurance for leaseholders.

Many leaseholders have attempted to challenge high buildings insurance premiums. But landlords have previously been under no obligation to reveal commissions which push up the premium and which are paid for by leaseholders. Even under the code, however, leaseholders must ask for the information because landlords will not be obliged to volunteer it.

The code, published by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), will also outline leaseholders' rights to be consulted about major works, what services should be included in management fees, the setting up

and running of reserve funds, and disputes procedures.

This is the first time that the duties of landlords and managing agents have been explicitly set out.

The code will cover all landlords and managing agents, not just the estimated 20 per cent who are members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

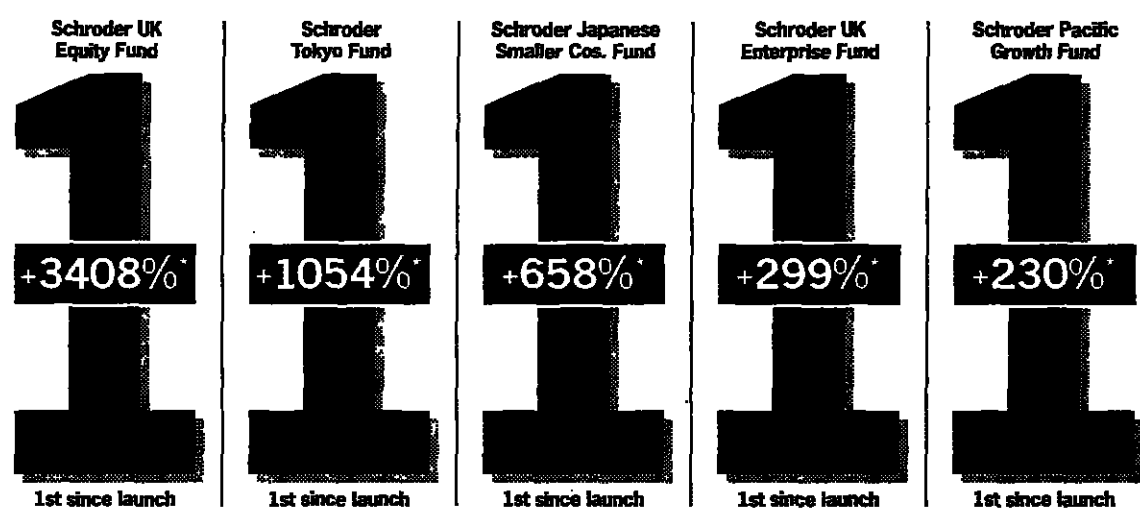
Pressure for the code has been growing since allegations that a number of landlords and agents had been making what leaseholders believed to be unreasonable service charge demands and allegedly pressuring those who refused to pay. Many leaseholders did not know their legal rights and there was no benchmark by which to judge the performance of managing agents.

Leaseholders will be able to take landlords or agents to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal for flouting the code.

Under the new Housing Act, leaseholders have the right to go to the tribunal to have a new manager appointed if the existing one proves incompetent or fraudulent. Non-compliance with the code will be grounds for appointing a new manager.

Gerry Fox, partner at Fineman Lever, the chartered surveyor, and chairman of the RICS code working party, said: "The underlying message is made clear in the code, that managing agents and freeholders must have regard to the fact that they are providing services for a tenant's home. They should recognise that tenants have a legitimate interest."

The code will come into effect from March 1997 and will be reviewed after two years. Leaseholders will be able to buy copies of the code from RICS Books at £9.95. Contact RICS, 12 Great George Street, London, SW1P 3AD.



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finds some leaseholders with a common problem

Flat pack fights back

Leaseholders of one Brighton landlord this week revealed to *The Times* their fight against what they believe are unreasonable service charges and their claims to have been threatened with eviction.

Anthony Scrivens owns and manages "hundreds" of freeholds along the South Coast held by a network of companies. Some properties are (perfectly legally) owned by one of his companies and managed by another. *The Times* invited his comments on the complaints.

Lindsay Secklin moved into her first flat in Brighton in May this year. Already she has received demands for £2,000 as her share of a £10,000 bill for maintenance and a £1,500 bill for management. The freehold of the block is owned by Adelaide Homes (Sussex) Ltd. The director of this company is Anthony Scrivens. The property is managed by Adelaide Property Management, of which Mr Scrivens is also a director.

This week, Ms Secklin's roof blew off in the storms which hit southern England. Water was cascading into her flat and coming through the light switches. Brighton council's environmental health officer warned her that the flat was dangerous and told her to move out. But Ms Secklin says that when she rang Mr Scrivens, his office denied that her situation was dangerous and said there was no problem. The brokers who organise the insurance for the block refused to speak to Ms Secklin, she says.

Mr Scrivens sent workmen to secure scaffolding and fit a tarpaulin on the instructions of the council. But Ms Secklin is angry that she has paid what she considers to be large sums of money in management charges. She says: "What does this money go on?"

Mr Scrivens rejected Ms Secklin's complaint that his office had minimised her problem. "I spent most of the morning there yesterday. We lost a section of left/butment off the flat roof and we needed to move people out of the top two flats." He argued that the brokers had been correct not to speak to Ms Secklin because they worked for him as landlord, not her as leaseholder. He confirmed the level of Ms Secklin's service charges but said: "How much was outstanding? Ms Secklin asked [about charges] when she bought the property and she knew there was maintenance needed. There were also arrears from the previous leaseholder."

Adelaide Homes (Sussex) Ltd also owns the freehold of a nearby block, where Danny McEvoy has a studio flat he bought in 1991 for £35,000. The flat is managed by Adelaide Property Management.

Mr McEvoy and fellow lessees have been in dispute over service charges since 1992, when the freehold was taken over by Placidness Ltd, another of Mr Scrivens's companies. On Christmas Eve 1992, Mr McEvoy and four other leaseholders were served with notices threatening eviction for non-payment. Each flat was charged £40 for the cost of serving the notices.

Now Mr McEvoy is disputing his share of service charges this year. These totalled



Home groan: leaseholders from the Sillwood Gate Residents' Association. From left, Lindsay Secklin, Lorne Brown, Keith Smith and Carole Sparkes

nearly £13,000 for the block of 15 flats. Of this total, buildings insurance accounted for £1,600, nearly £5,000 was for maintenance and £2,400 for management fees. Mr McEvoy owes more than £1,000. He says: "I haven't got £1,000. Nor have I got the next £1,000 or whatever it will be."

He and his fellow lessees want to buy the freehold but do not qualify for the right to buy because the ground floor of the block is a car wash. Under the 1993 leasehold enfranchisement legislation, blocks where more than 10 per cent of the space is commercial do not qualify.

Mr Scrivens said: "We haven't increased the charges for five years, although there is more work because of the new legislation. I've been permitting Mr McEvoy to pay his service charges in instalments, although this means more administration and more costs."

He denied that the serving of notices threatening possession had been deliberately timed to fall on Christmas Eve. "This is probably a matter of timing, quarter days and rent days and so on, or of solicitors clearing their books. I'm not in the business of creating anxiety," he added. "I don't agree with the term harassment. But sometimes there is no other way to bring things to a head [except by serving a notice]. A notice is intended to precipitate a reaction."

Leaseholders in three of the five flats in another block are fighting long-running

disputes with Adelaide Homes (Sussex) Ltd — their freeholder since 1995 — over service charges. Previously the block was owned by Placidness Ltd. The managing agent was originally another of Mr Scrivens's companies, Lorecourt Ltd. It changed to Adelaide Property Management in 1995. The leaseholders were presented with a £40,000 bill in summer 1993 for major repair work. The work was meant to take 12 weeks but dragged on for a year. The leaseholders' surveyor described the work as being of a "disgraceful standard".

The leaseholders have been served with eviction notices for disputing payment for the work and bills for other repairs. Notices to one leaseholder were served on December 21, the last day before the Christmas weekend that year.

Mr Scrivens said the disputes were the subject of continuing legal action but claimed he was taking action against one leaseholder to get her to assume her responsibilities for repairs under the lease. He said that the standard of the building work had been "pretty good" and had taken longer than planned because more problems had emerged.

He said: "The only way property is profitable is when it runs well. I have a good working relationship with 98 per cent of my tenants. When you've got problems, you spend vast amounts of time dealing with them. I don't like litigating. There is no profit to be made from litigation. But sometimes I'm forced to."

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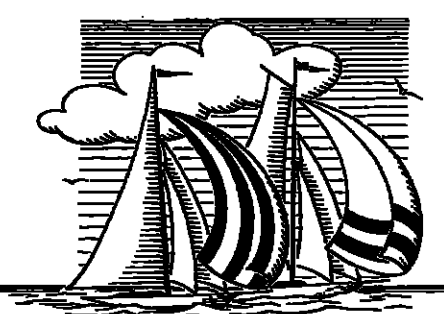
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Fiona Bawdon goes in search of a politically correct pension

An ethical stance can prove most rewarding



Can you be ethical and still get a good return on your pension? This was the dilemma faced by Margaret Urwin during her Weekend Money Financial Fitness Test.

Ms Urwin, 35, and her partner, Peter, have just come back from spending more than four years in New Zealand. They are now in the process of re-establishing themselves here, which involves finding jobs and somewhere to live, as well as getting their finances in order.

The New Zealand trip has eaten up the couple's savings, so there is a limit to how much financial planning they can do at the moment. Ms Urwin does, however, have some money to put into a pension each month.

She has just been taken on as director of the charity Concah — Continuing Care At Home — which aims to help the disabled and chronically sick to stay in their own homes. Initially, she is working the charity three days a week for a pro rata salary of £38,000. She will be employed full-time as soon as she has raised enough money to pay for her own salary — which Ms Urwin reckons will be within two years. As the charity's first employee, as well as fundraising, she is responsible for things such as finding office space, buying computers and planning Concah's future strategy. The appointment has also prompted her to focus on her own personal long-term planning.

Concah has offered to put the equivalent of 9.6 per cent of her monthly salary into the pension of her choosing. "They have done this because they can't offer other huge benefits," she says. It is this which prompted Ms Urwin to think about her retirement provision and to seek the advice of Victoria Amey from Fiona Price & Partners, independent financial advisers based in London. She admits: "If they

hadn't made me the offer, I don't think I would have immediately rushed out and organised a pension."

Victoria Amey says her firm routinely asks clients whether they want to invest ethically — but she was aware that, as Ms Urwin works for a charity, it might be of particular concern to her. She explained that an ethical fund is one where shares are screened according to positive or negative criteria.

Ms Urwin said: "It wasn't something I'd considered before, because I hadn't considered a pension before. When Victoria talked about it, it made absolute sense. I realised I am very concerned about where I put my money."

At first, Ms Amey suggested putting half the money into a company's unit-linked ethical fund, and half into its standard with-profits policy. But Ms Urwin was adamant she wanted to be 100 per cent ethical.

If the price of such a principled stance was a slightly lower return, she was happy to pay it, she added. Ms Amey insisted, however, that this might not be necessary. "Those companies which do act ethically are the ones which are going to forge ahead in the next century. Those which are bad for the community are being penalised increasingly by governments and the public react unfavourably towards them."

In addition, the pension she recommended — Friends Provident's Stewardship Fund — has a performance record which bears comparison with many of the top non-ethical UK-based equity funds. For example, according to October's *Pensions Management* magazine, it has given a return of 14.8 per cent a year over five years, compared with 12.5 per cent for Friends Provident's UK Equity Fund. The Stewardship fund, one of the longest-established ethical schemes, aims to weed out companies which harm the



Margaret Urwin wanted 100 per cent of her contributions invested in an ethical fund

environment or trade in things like weapons, pornography and tobacco. Instead, it tries to focus on those which "make a positive contribution to society" by things such as conservation, pollution control or good equal opportunities.

Ms Amey also recommended taking out a waiver of premium, which would protect contributions to the scheme in the event that Ms Urwin was unable to work through ill-health. Although the extra cost means slightly less of Concah's contribution being invested in her actual pension, Ms Urwin has seen enough of the problems which lack of financial provision can cause to those who are unable to work to decide it was worth it.

Ms Amey's other recommendation was that the pension should be written in trust because Ms Urwin and her partner are unmarried. Without this there could be a prolonged delay.

Finally, one more consideration. Having sold up once for foreign parts, Ms Urwin could never totally rule out wanting to up sticks again. Ms Amey was able to be reassuring. "The great thing about having a pension fund is that you will be able to draw it anywhere in the world."

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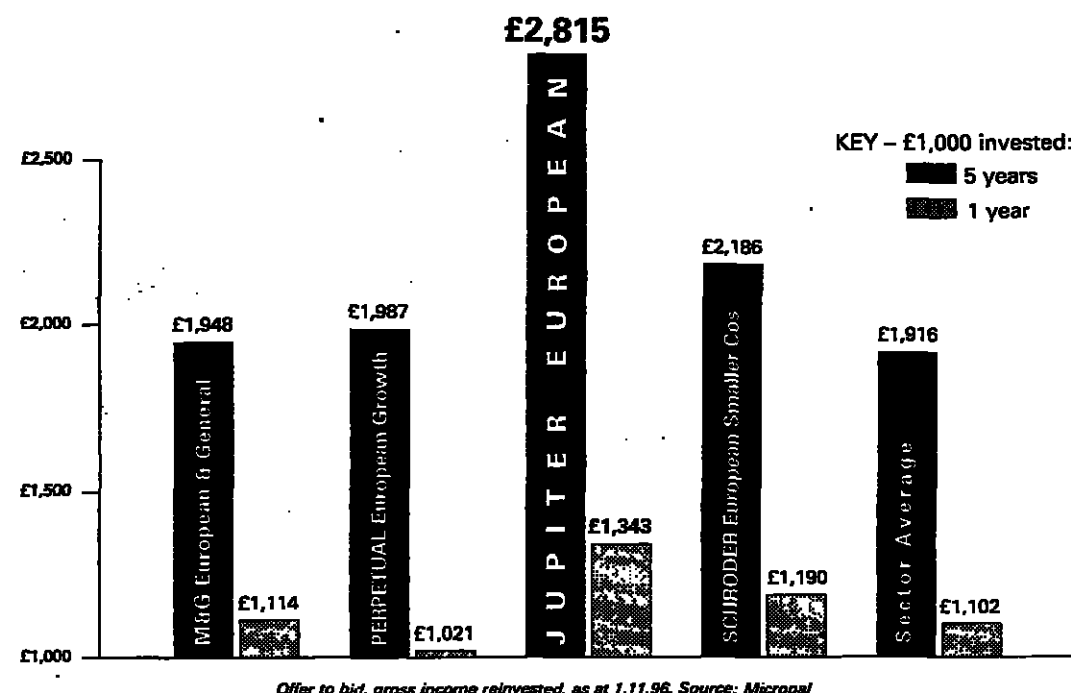
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Marianne Curphey on whether it is worth asking a professional

Don't be perplexed

Investors who have at least £50,000 with which to buy shares directly but are too busy to follow the stock market or do research themselves can enlist, at a price, the help of a portfolio manager.

However, there are risks attached and direct ownership of equities is not for everyone. There are 9.5 million private shareholders in the UK, but only 22 per cent of them have direct investments in shares.

For investors with a large lump sum who want some help with building up their portfolio, there are two sorts of management available: advisory and discretionary.

An advisory broker will charge to assess your need for income or growth and your attitude to risk, and make stock recommendations. He will consult you before he buys or sells stock.

A discretionary portfolio manager takes over responsibility for the running of your portfolio and, with the help of a professional fund manager, buys and sells stock on your behalf. As the name suggests, his contract gives him the discretion to deal in stocks between his meetings with you. This service is cheaper because the broker does not have the cost of contacting his client every time he wishes to alter the portfolio.

Advice on share dealing is governed by the Financial Services Act (FSA), which was implemented in 1986 and is designed to protect the interests of consumers. However, investors still need to shop around because levels of service and fees vary widely.

Historically, all portfolios were advisory because banks catered for the needs of a handful of wealthy clients and investment strategy was limited to buying government gilt.

These days a wide variety of people use private client services to manage their money. They include people who have inherited lump sums, divorcees who have won large settlements when their marriage ended, parents who want trusts for their daughters in order to transfer money to grandchildren, and people with large personal pension funds. This is in addition to those who have made money floating companies on the stock market, earned big bonuses at City firms or speculated on the property market in the 1980s.

As the market moves more



swiftly and big institutional investors buy and sell on a daily basis, brokers are keen to persuade clients to opt for discretionary portfolio management.

Finola Healey, head of investor services with ProShare, the organisation formed to promote wider share ownership, says that once people have chosen their broker they should keep in close contact to make sure they are aware of transactions taking place in the portfolio.

"Set a limit on the number of transactions and get your adviser to send you details of the changes every two months," she says.

An average management fee is between 1 per cent and 1.5 per cent of the market value of your investments per year, although there are often commission charges on top.

The number of times shares are bought and sold in a portfolio does have an effect on

its performance, since you may be charged a dealing fee for each transaction, and you will certainly be charged stamp duty.

Even if performance is good, a fee charged by a manager every time he switches an investment on your behalf will eat away at your capital sum.

One of the major private client houses, James Capel Investment Management, based in the City of London, will manage portfolios only for private clients who have sums of £200,000 or more to invest.

George Lynne, head of marketing with James Capel, says clients have unlimited access to their manager, who meets them on a regular basis to discuss their investment aims.

For this, James Capel charges an annual management charge of 0.6 per cent on the first £500,000 of a portfolio. In addition, there are

commission charges on a sliding scale of 1.11 per cent on the first £10,000 and 0.66 per cent on the next £15,000. James Capel does not make "bargain charges" for every share bought or sold, and the fee involves custody.

"Having such a charging structure means the temptation to deal frequently is removed," Mr Lynne said. "The average movement of a portfolio per year is buying in 20 per cent of stocks and selling 20 per cent. If an investor notices that he is paying commission for dealing on more than 40 per cent of his portfolio, he should ask his fund manager for an explanation. Sometimes there is a good reason for this, but sometimes there is not."

Another City firm, Henderson Crosthwaite, offers full discretionary and advisory portfolio management.

For the former, it charges an annual management fee of 0.5

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per cent on the value of the portfolio (except on personal equity plans held within the fund, which are exempt) plus dealing commission of 1.25 per cent on the first £10,000. For the advisory service, the annual charge is 0.4 per cent plus dealing commission of 1.65 per cent.

Tony Richards, a director with the firm, says the advisory service is more expensive because of the extra work involved in contacting the client every time the manager wants to buy or sell.

He says a recent survey showed that the average commission made by a broker on a £100,000 portfolio was £1,400 per annum, or a charge of 1.4 per cent overall.

Only a quarter of Henderson's clients use the discretionary service, a figure he believes should be higher. Few quibble with investment decisions when they are consulted before stocks are bought or sold. Mr Richards said: "The FT-SE 100 index can easily move 50 points in a day, and if

you have to spend an hour ringing around clients you could miss the bottom of the market. It can mean you also miss placings and sometimes new issues."

The average value of the portfolio managed by Henderson is £480,000 per person. The minimum is about £75,000. Mr Richards says family members of existing clients can, however, invest much smaller amounts.

He says that over the long term, clients have historically earned a return of 14 per cent from equities, 6 per cent from gilts and about 5 per cent from deposit accounts.

A balanced portfolio should have 65 per cent of its holdings in the UK, 25 per cent abroad in Japan, the US and Europe, and 10 per cent in gilts or near cash. The weighting of gilts in the portfolio should increase as the client nears retirement.

Kean Seager, an independent financial adviser with Whitechurch Securities of

Bristol, says turnover of 25 per cent in a year would not be out of place for an aggressive portfolio. He suggests using the FT-SE All-Share and FT-SE 100 as benchmarks to compare the performance of your portfolio. However, your portfolio may have done worse or better than the FT-SE 100 index if it is heavily weighted in overseas investments.

Under Personal Investment Authority regulations, advisers are not allowed to make forecasts of how your portfolio will perform. However, they can say how they have done in the past, although they may quote the best result from the best client over the best period.

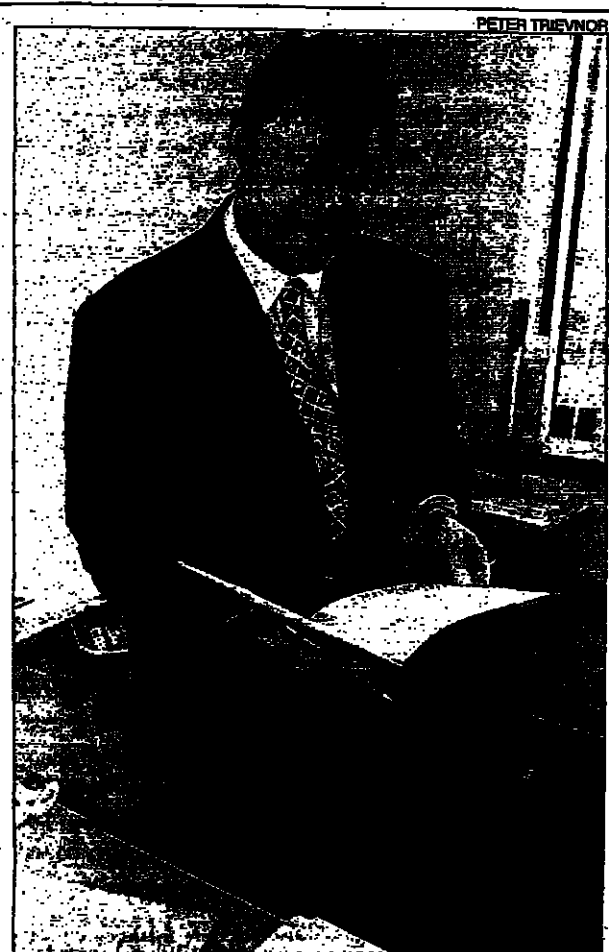
Financial advisers agree that in the current economic climate, when you can get an average 4 per cent interest per annum from a building society instant access account, you could reasonably expect to make 8 per cent on your managed portfolio and 10 per cent if you opt for higher-risk stocks.

A glance at the indices for

the UK markets shows what you might have expected from your portfolio. Over the last 15 years, the All-share index has grown 10 per cent per annum on average while the FT-SE 250 has grown by more than 9 per cent. Taking into account dividends paid out from company profits to shareholders, you would have received an average 14 per cent annual growth from the All-share.

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Liquidated portfolio: Geoffrey Cutts was not impressed

Market foray proved costly

Geoffrey Cutts, a marketing manager, put £44,000 into a portfolio managed on a discretionary basis by Raphael Zorn Hensley Limited, a City stockbroker.

He invested the first tranche of £20,000 in September 1993, followed by £10,000 in October 1993 and £14,000 in July 1994. Having already invested the maximum allowed in tax exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) and personal equity plans (PEPs), he wanted some exposure to the stock market.

Three years later, unhappy with the performance of his portfolio, he ordered the firm to liquidate his assets. He received back just under £44,000. "I am disappointed that in three years my broker has not made me a profit," he said, "particularly when the UK markets have been doing so well."

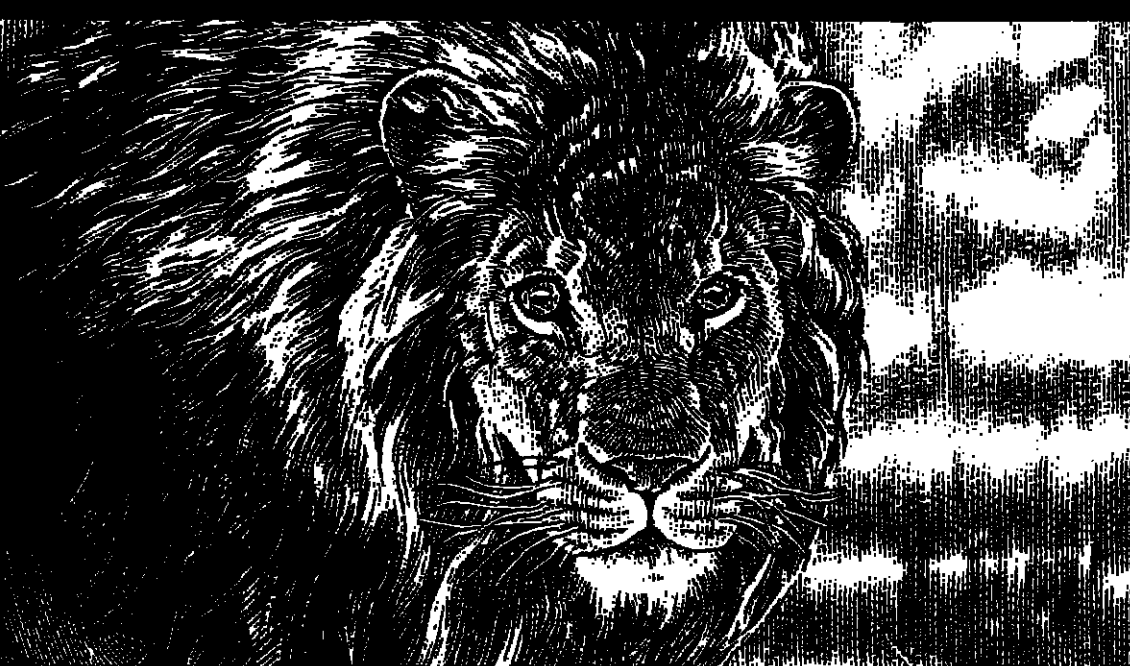
The company charges 1.95 per cent on the first £10,000 of UK equities and convert-

ibles bought and 0.5 per cent on the balance. The minimum commission is £30. Clients also pay a bargain charge of £12.50 per contract. This means a charge is made every time shares are bought or sold. In common with other investors, Mr Cutts also has to pay stamp duty.

John Bucknall, Mr Cutts's portfolio manager, said the charges were "not dissimilar to anyone else's". He added: "There are charges but I am not suggesting that they have eaten away at the portfolio."

He said the stock market over the past two years had been "extremely difficult" and a number of quality stocks had disappeared. "It only takes two or three stocks to fall and they spoil the performance of the whole portfolio," he said. "You need to look ahead for five to eight years, by which time quality stocks should prove their worth. Many people have been in a similar situation to Mr Cutts."

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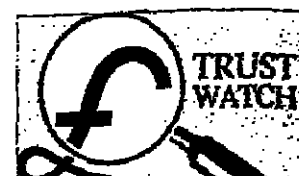


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Caroline Merrell considers the risks and rewards of emerging market funds



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For those who have money to burn, the emerging economies of the Far East, South America, and the former Eastern European countries can provide among the very best returns. However, the potential for disaster is great — any investment in an emerging market can be something of a white-knuckle ride.

Many of these countries are politically unstable, economically volatile and prone to natural disasters. Added to this is the potential for loss caused by big fluctuations in currency — a sudden devaluation can wipe out any gains through the fund managers' good stock selection. For example, the devaluation of the Mexican peso at the end of 1994 halved the value of many Latin American unit trusts. Most were highly exposed to Mexico, then considered to be the most stable of the Latin American economies.

Economists believe, however, that over the long term, emerging markets will perform better than the developed economies of Europe and America. According to Sarah Ross, an economist with Foreign & Colonial, one of the leading fund managers in emerging markets, the best performing countries over the last year have been in the former Eastern bloc.

She said: "Hungary and Poland have performed particularly well. The Hungarian market is up 105 per cent in dollar terms since the beginning of this year, while Poland is up 65 per cent." Hungary had lagged behind other former Eastern bloc countries in terms of reforms — over the past few months it has made



Recovery area: Ms Ross says Russia will be a top market in the next five years in spite of President Yeltsin's recent operation

up some of the ground. She added: "Its currency has been devalued, and it has had to suffer high interest rates. It has also gone through a number of privatisations. This has paid off in terms of stock market performance."

Latin America has also produced some good results over the last year, in spite of the fact that two of the continent's biggest economies, Argentina and Mexico, have been in a recession over the past 12

months. Ms Ross said: "The best performing economies have been Venezuela and Brazil." She added that Venezuela's growth had been helped by intervention of the International Monetary Fund. The country has also embarked on a privatisation programme. Brazil's economy had been helped by continued fiscal and political stability; growth there was about 3 per cent.

The other biggest emerging market area is the Far East, in-

cluding China, China via Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea and the Philippines. The best market in this area has been China. Ms Ross said: "China was growing particularly fast, too fast, but this has been controlled with tighter monetary policy. Investors in Hong Kong and China are now much more optimistic about the handover in 1997. China has been a lot less confrontational with the UK over the issue." But Korea and

Thailand have done badly — both have suffered political problems. The Korean market, for instance, has fallen 20 per cent over the year. Other countries which have performed well include Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan — the latter has risen by 27 per cent over the 12 months.

Surprisingly, Ms Ross believes that one of the most promising markets over the next five years will be Russia, in spite of President Yeltsin's

recent heart bypass operation. She said: "The country has just successfully completed an election — something that two years ago would have seemed uncertain."

She and other emerging market specialists point out that Russia, with all its border problems and internal political divisions, will not be an investment for the faint-hearted. She said: "Take at least a five-year view."

Anyone interested in investing in an emerging market fund should choose fund managers with a long-established track record in the region. They should also consider choosing a fund that is as geographically diverse as possible. Companies specialising in emerging markets include Templeton, Foreign & Colonial, Barings and Thornton.

A typical global emerging market fund would be one such as the Baring Global Emerging Markets fund. It is 14.2 per cent invested in Brazil, 13.8 per cent in Mexico, 11.4 per cent in Malaysia, 9.3 per cent in South Africa, 7.5 per cent in Korea, with the rest divided up from countries as far afield as Pakistan and Peru.

One other country that is favoured by some, because of its burgeoning middle class and huge domestic market, is India. Prolific this week launched an India opportunities fund which aims to capture some of the growth in the economy. John Ions, sales director at Prolific, said: "India has a mature stock market, with the Bombay stock exchange having been established for over 120 years. More than 5,000 companies are quoted with a market capitalisation of \$110 billion."

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Holiday industry set to climb above turbulence

The £7 billion holiday market has traditionally been a cut-throat and high-risk business with companies flying by the seats of their pants on water-thin profit margins and folding as quickly as they spring up.

Last year was particularly bad for the industry. The good weather encouraged people to holiday in the United Kingdom rather than abroad. On top of this, tour operators had increased the number of holidays on offer. The lack of demand forced down prices, leaving most companies heavily out of pocket.

First Choice, whose group chief executive, Francis Baron, was ousted this month, suffered particularly badly. Inspirations, too, has issued a profits warning.

Fingers burnt, the tour operators cut capacity by 15 per cent this summer. This, coupled with increased demand after a comparatively cold summer, has helped to push up prices. Merrill Lynch, the securities house, forecasts profits from United Kingdom tour operating and travel retailing to be £31 million this year, up from £23 million last year, and for the improved trend to continue throughout 1997.

The industry is becoming increasingly dominated by the leading players, such as Thomson, owned by the Thomson Corporation of Canada; Airtours; Thomas Cook,



Long haul: holidaymakers now want to travel to more distant locations such as Thailand

owned by Westdeutsche Landesbank First Choice and Inspirations.

As holidaymakers travel to more distant locations, such as Malaysia, Thailand, and the United States, and quality expectations continue to rise, holiday companies are coming under increasing pressure to merge with international partners and become vertically integrated. It is now common for holiday companies to own the tour operator, the travel agency, a charter airline and hotels.

But this trend has worried the Office of Fair Trading, which referred tour operators and travel agents to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission this month. The OFT is concerned that travel agents will plug the holidays offered by their owners without giving customers a proper choice.

The market has taken a relatively sanguine view of the referral, with one analyst dismissing it as "a complete irrelevance". Many feel that competition is already fierce enough. Despite the volatile nature of the market and the



SECTOR IN FOCUS

shadow cast by the MMC referral, the longer-term picture is rosy. Figures from the Henley Centre for Forecasting show that United Kingdom spending on holidays abroad is forecast to double over the next five years, from £14.3 billion in 1995 to nearly £29 billion in 2001.

By contrast, spending on domestic holidays is forecast to grow at a much slower rate. This is bad news for the likes of Rank, which owns Badins and Oasis, and Scottish & Newcastle, which owns Pontins and Center Parcs. The clever companies are those diversifying abroad so

that they are less exposed to the vagaries of the United Kingdom market. Analysts are particularly bullish about Airtours, the £1.1 billion success story led by David Crossland, the chairman and chief executive.

Its Mediterranean cruise holiday joint venture with Carnival Cruises of the United States is doing well, as is its Scandinavian Leisure Group subsidiary, which has a 50 per cent market share in Scandinavia. And with Carnival Cruises tipped to make a full takeover bid for Airtours next year, the company looks a worthwhile punt for investors.

However, there is not much else in the sector to interest investors. Thomas Cook and Thomson are not quoted on the UK stock market. First Choice's management problems make it a risky, if cheap, buy, while Inspirations is obviously experiencing problems, too. Eurocamp offers a decent 7.2 per cent yield for those seeking income, but it has unexciting growth prospects.

MATTHEW WALL

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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Flat-rate method is the fairest way to distribute society flotation shares

From Mr S.P. Hurst
Sir, With reference to the Alliance & Leicester stock market flotation.

I have been an investor with the society for more than two years and I had considerably more than £100 in my account at the time of the flotation announcement.

Had the society followed a policy of distributing shares based on account balances as in the National & Provincial takeover by Abbey National and the proposed Halifax flotation, then I would have more than likely received more shares than the basic 250 being proposed.

I am, however, more than happy to share equally the flotation proceeds with less well off members of the society such as pensioners or mortgage payers struggling to

bring up families. I am appalled to read of a pressure group (which now apparently has support of the Duke of Rutland) whose personal wealth is estimated at £80 million) has been formed to oppose an across-the-board distribution and to try to ensure that wealthy members get more shares.

I feel a flat-rate distribution is the fairest and most just way of distributing shares.

I hope that each member will exercise his or her membership rights and vote for the distribution as proposed and be determined that no way will this "take" from the poor and give to the rich "pressure group" succeed.
Yours faithfully,
S. HURST,
355 Chesterfield Road,
Sheffield.

Problems faced by loyal staff at NatWest

From the General Secretary, NatWest Staff Association
Sir, Recent correspondence (Service declined after Service Centre opened, Mr R.A. Smeethurst and Mrs E.A. Daulby, October 26) illustrates succinctly the many issues facing staff in NatWest today.

Both correspondents correctly recognise that the problems are not due to the staff, but to the bank's approach to change.

Mrs Daulby puts in a nutshell the many issues facing loyal NatWest staff who have worked there for a number of years but who now feel that the bank is taking advantage. Unfortunately for many NatWest staff, they are too frightened to speak up. Mrs Daulby has done and it needs more customers to complain publicly and privately about the level of service that they

are receiving and which they are expected to pay for before things will change.

As a union, we are not opposed to the onward march of technology but we do want to ensure that technological advancement goes hand in hand with the better service for the customer, coupled with some decency and integrity for the staff who have to stay as well as those who have to go.

Unfortunately, the tales told by Mr Smeethurst and Mrs Daulby are only too common but if members of the public want to write to me with the difficulties they are experiencing, we will try to feed them through to the bank urgently.
Yours faithfully,
RORY MURPHY,
Churchill Court,
Palmerston Road,
Bournemouth, Dorset.



Long way to go: the decision not to allow Post Office staff to share in its profits would have been made by the DTI

Double standard by Government over PRP

From Mr R. Kirtley
Sir, I would like to augment the opinions raised in your article (1.5bn pay monster in need of control, November 2) and Dominic Moss and Philip Fisher who corresponded on November 9.

Messrs Moss and Fisher concurred that it would be folly for this Government to remove the tax concession of profit-related pay, being detrimental to employment and how affected people would subsequently react against the enormous sum simply handed over to the Treasury annually (about £350 million the most recent) one can see why the preacher will not

follow his own sermon in the example of the Royal Mail. Senior Post Office managers can only operate under the DTI outlines as witnessed currently with the industrial action problems, and Mr Ian Lang's intervention, or at least discussion, with the employees would have been government policy and not a decision at Post Office board level.

For the very reason that my last point states, your November 2 article may have more credence than your correspondents' opinion and the Government may dispense with common sense in the

pursuit of funds. This knowledge is intrinsic in the Treasury who would not risk any cut in their annual dividend by profit-related incentives being introduced to the Post Office or any other state industry which turned over a huge and growing annual bounty.

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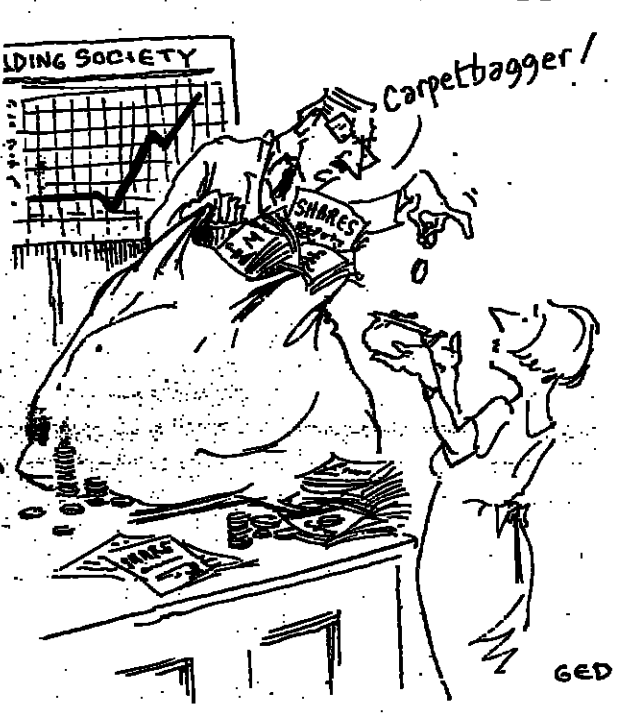
From Miss J. Brocklebank
Sir, Further to my letter "Please, Mr Taxman, do wake up" (Weekend Money Letters, August 17), I am happy to report the local tax office has since acted with speed and courtesy.

On publication of the letter, I had an immediate apology from the taxman plus explanation for the delay. Not only has he delivered the money I'd hoped to recoup but has calculated he owed me a lot more. This bonus, which has just arrived, is like manna from heaven. We are now bang up to date. Today I even had a coding notice for 1996-97. It just shows what a bit of publicity can do.

Several of your readers kindly took the trouble to write offering me advice - including a retired tax inspector. I am most grateful.
Yours faithfully,
J. BROCKLEBANK,
5 Sharratt Avenue,
Bishopdown, Salisbury.

Letters for Weekend Money may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5082 and should include a daytime telephone number. The Times regrets it cannot always give individual replies or advice and asks that original documents are not sent in. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns.

Clever investor or carpetbagger?



From Mr E.W. Lighton
Sir, If I had bought shares in a quiet, little-known company which suddenly increased in their value and I sold at the short-lived peak. I would be congratulated on my financial acumen (or luck).

However, I, and no doubt many others, elected to put money into a wide range of building societies (losing, admittedly, tiered interest advantages) in the now realised expectation that our perfectly safe capital (ignoring the inflation argument) would produce "windfall" returns.

Tax and the single girl

From Ms E.M. Balsom
Sir, Caroline Merrell's piece on the single and married persons' tax allowances (Call for less tax on family values, November 9) was of particular interest.

On a per capita basis as a single person I must pay 75 per cent of the council tax, 100 per cent of the water bill, 100 per cent of my house insurance, 100 per cent of phone, gas and electricity standing charges.

In contrast, the two individuals of many, if not most, couples each contribute only 50 per cent of these necessities. Many associations offer couples a discount on a second membership, thus reducing the per capita cost.

A single person must shoulder many financial burdens and it is totally out of order for Care or any Member of Parliament to attack developments in the single person's tax allowance.

If Mr Alison does introduce an early day motion, perhaps his adulterous colleagues will stand up in the House and tell us if they would have adhered to their marriage vows had the married couple's allowance been higher.
Yours sincerely,
ELIZABETH BALSOM,
14 Ryder Street,
SW1.

CGT ALLOWANCES - OCTOBER 1996

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in October 1996

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	-	0.882	0.771	0.686	0.598	0.538	0.489	0.386
February	-	0.854	0.764	0.673	0.582	0.532	0.483	0.376
March	0.536	0.880	0.758	0.657	0.580	0.529	0.477	0.370
April	0.888	0.825	0.735	0.623	0.575	0.511	0.454	0.348
May	0.884	0.817	0.729	0.615	0.572	0.508	0.448	0.337
June	0.879	0.813	0.724	0.612	0.573	0.509	0.443	0.333
July	0.875	0.808	0.720	0.610	0.571	0.507	0.441	0.332
August	0.873	0.798	0.710	0.611	0.572	0.508	0.426	0.328
September	0.879	0.787	0.707	0.612	0.585	0.502	0.419	0.319
October	0.870	0.781	0.695	0.609	0.562	0.495	0.405	0.308
November	0.861	0.775	0.691	0.603	0.549	0.487	0.395	0.295
December	0.864	0.770	0.682	0.601	0.544	0.489	0.394	0.295
1990	1.081	1.092	1.093	1.094	1.095	1.096		
January	0.287	0.181	0.134	0.115	0.088	0.053	0.024	
February	0.280	0.175	0.128	0.108	0.082	0.047	0.019	
March	0.287	0.170	0.125	0.104	0.079	0.043	0.015	
April	0.279	0.165	0.106	0.084	0.057	0.032	0.008	
May	0.219	0.152	0.104	0.080	0.063	0.028	0.006	
June	0.214	0.147	0.104	0.091	0.063	0.027	0.005	
July	0.213	0.149	0.108	0.093	0.068	0.032	0.009	
August	0.201	0.147	0.107	0.088	0.068	0.028	0.005	
September	0.189	0.143	0.103	0.084	0.061	0.021	Nil	
October	0.180	0.138	0.092	0.085	0.059	0.027		
November	0.183	0.134	0.101	0.085	0.058	0.027		
December	0.184	0.135	0.105	0.084	0.053	0.021		

The 10 month rise for disposals by individuals on or after April 6, 1982 (April 1, 1985 for companies) is the month in which the allowable expenditure was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

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1996 Low High Company Price % Chg % PE				1996 Low High Company Price % Chg % PE			
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES							
55	65	Adnams Ltd	400	13	15	17.5	18.5
56	67	Beck's Ltd	52	11	11	17.0	18.0
57	68	Carlsberg Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
58	69	Heineken Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
59	70	Kaiser Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
60	71	Miller Brewing Co	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
61	72	Pilsener Beer Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
62	73	Stout & Co Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
63	74	Tottenham Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
64	75	Watney & Sons Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
65	76	Windsor Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
66	77	Worthington Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
67	78	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
68	79	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
69	80	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
70	81	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
71	82	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
72	83	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
73	84	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
74	85	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
75	86	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
76	87	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
77	88	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
78	89	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
79	90	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
80	91	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
81	92	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
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85	96	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
86	97	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
87	98	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
88	99	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
89	100	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
90	101	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
91	102	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
92	103	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
93	104	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
94	105	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
95	106	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
96	107	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
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125	136	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
126	137	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
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133	144	Yellands Brewery Ltd	51	11	11	17.0	18.0
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THE TIMES LINGUISTIC INFORMATION SERVICE

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India

CRICKET: AUSTRALIA RECOVER TO TAKE INITIATIVE

England A stay cool in spite of White heat

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN MELBOURNE

CRAIG WHITE, eager to succeed against the Victoria side where he first established himself as a cricketer, instead left a different impression on the second day of the England A tour match in Melbourne. White became embroiled in a pitch argument with David Saker, the Victoria fast bowler, after failing by one run to achieve his side's first century of the trip.

Resuming on 92, with England at 231 for four, White progressed smoothly to 97 until he ran a two and collided with Saker mid-wicket. The two squared up to each other as tempers rose.

Instead of regaining his composure, as he had done the previous day for numerous weather interruptions, White drove wildly at Damien Fleming's next delivery and was caught by Laurie Harper at slip. Although England as a team recovered sufficiently to establish a second-day lead of 408, after Victoria had reached 30 without loss in reply to the tour team's 438, White did not easily shrug off the incident.

"If he wants to play it that

West Indies show signs of decline as hostilities begin

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN BRISBANE

BRISBANE (first day of five, West Indies won toss): Australia have scored 282 for five wickets against West Indies

POR fully 18 months, West Indies have plotted retribution for the defeat that they thought they would never suffer. Yesterday, as their moment finally arrived on a propitiously blue Brisbane morning, they contrived to look unprepared for the task or, just maybe, unequal to it.

There was much about their approach to the opening day of this five-Test series that was evocative and impressive. They hunted in the familiar packs, lay patiently in wait for the opposition to show frailty, and looked suitably animated once they did so. Yet there was also plenty that indicated a team no longer capable of scaling the peaks of old, no longer an irresistible force.

The West Indies' tactics were predictable. They chose to bowl against an Australia side suddenly and unaccountably unsteady of itself and, when the early breakthrough failed to bear further fruit, they bowled, at first, methodically on a pitch without spirit.

The betrayal, the exposure of a team that can now be thought in decline, came when, on two occasions, they achieved the kind of breach that would once have preceded a landslide. Twice they took two wickets in quick succession, but on both occasions they were unable to press home the advantage, a failure attributable in part to a lack of wit and penetration in their bowling. Something vital was missing, especially from the unhappy Ian Bishop.

Not that the Australians should go short of credit. They entered this match to a chorus of doubts over the top-order batting that was so recently peerless, over the form and fitness of their two key bowlers, over their once inviolable wicketkeeper and even over their leadership. They had also just been badly beaten in India, so this was an examination of resources and

resolution. They passed part one with honour, though not without error or assistance. West Indies helped them, late in the day, with bowling that was frequently misdirected, occasionally desultory and, when aimed at Steve Waugh, guilty of being obsolete by four years.

There was a time, as recently as West Indies' last visit to these shores, when Steve Waugh looked vulnerable to fast, short-pitched bowling. West Indies traded gleefully on it. Those days, however, are long gone, and in maintaining a Test average of around 70 through the last four calendar years, Waugh has become a

challenge to his territory, had helped Waugh to add an unbroken 86 for the sixth wicket. Australia were on top, if not quite in clover.

A crowd of almost 17,000, the biggest for a first day at the Gabba in 20 years, was absorbed rather than excited, sensing that these sessions could dictate much of what follows in the series. The past four Tests on this ground have produced positive results, and the winning of this one will have immense psychological significance.

It was not a good day for every Australian player. Paradoxically, it was a good day for one who was not even picked. Michael Slater, gifted but impetuous, had hoped to be chosen ahead of either Matthew Elliott or Michael Bevan, but he was not. Struck unusually silent by shock, Slater will have watched from Sydney as Elliott, on his debut, and Bevan failed to score.

Elliott's nought was long and painful. The tall left-hander with the angular face never looked at ease before falling to Ambrose in the fifth over. Much later, Bevan was out first ball as Walsh, rising to a pivotal moment in a way that his troops could not emulate, confounded him with a ball of pace and bounce, nervily fenced to third slip.

Between times, there were contrasting innings to savour from Taylor and Ponting during a second-wicket stand of 126. Taylor, who needed 90 minutes to reach double figures, had at last begun to strike the ball confidently after three hours at the crease when he misread Walsh's length and dragged on an attempted pull. His 43 had been attractive only in its bloody-mindedness.

Ponting, however, brought the unfettered arrogance of youth to a fair situation, punctuating frequent air shots with strokes of dazzling pedigree. He is not a natural No 3 in the sense that No 4 will never sit entirely at ease, but he is a tonic and, at 21, an unlimited talent.

RECORDS

AUSTRALIA: First Innings

M A Taylor b Walsh	43
M T Elliott c Browne b Ambrose	0
R Ponting c Walsh b Benjamin	88
M E Waugh c Browne b Walsh	86
S R Waugh not out	46
G S Green c Samuel b Walsh	0
D A Healy not out	17
Total (5 wickets)	282

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-130, 3-146, 4-198, 5-198

BOWLING: Ambrose 21-2-83-1; Walsh 22-4-83-3; Benjamin 22-5-64-1; Bishop 15-1-40-0; Hooper 10-0-35-0.

WEST INDIES: S L Campbell, R G Samuels, S C Lara, S Chandrasekhar, C L Hooper, J C Adams, J C O'Brien, I R Bishop, G E L Ambrose, K C G Benjamin, C A Walsh.

Umpires: S G Rendell (Australia) and C J Michely (South Africa).

phenomenon of the modern game.

His last innings against West Indies brought him a double-century in Jamaica and was responsible for the series defeat that the Caribbean still cannot believe. The cricketers of those islands, however, seem not to have learnt from it and, yesterday, they insisted upon peppering Waugh with short balls of no sense or profit.

The outcome was that Australia recovered stoically from the shock of losing two prime wickets in consecutive balls to the splendid Waugh. By the close of a tense day, Healy, reacting as one would expect

India pin hopes on Laxman

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

INDIA'S brittle batting crumbled under sustained pressure to leave South Africa in the driving seat in the first Test in Ahmedabad yesterday. The South Africans used the deteriorating wicket to reduce the home team to 172 for seven in their second innings by close of the third day's play.

Allan Donald added three wickets to his first innings tally of four and Par Symcox picked up two to restrict India's lead to 151 with only three wickets in hand. India's hopes of a last-ditch fightback on the 22-year-old debutant, Venkat Laxman, who defied the South Africans for nearly three hours to remain unbeaten on 50.

Laxman and Anil Kumble, on 22, who came together with the score at 124 for seven, survived the final hour by adding an unbeaten 48 for the eighth wicket. South Africa's progress was delayed by a ten-minute hold-up after tea when Hansie Cronje led the tour team off the field to protest at unruly crowd behaviour.

Fanie de Villiers, the tall opener, hit a career-best 67 not out in his South Africa's first innings from the overnight score of 202 for eight to 244 within 30 minutes of the

start. De Villiers, who put on 64 for the eighth wicket with Symcox (32) on Thursday, added a record 60 for the ninth with Donald (17). The tail helped the South Africans add 125 for the last three wickets after the first seven had fallen for 119 on the second day. De Villiers became the highest scorer in the bowler-dominated match, batting at No 9.

The Indians lost their openers, Sanjay Manjrekar and Navin Mongia, before the deficit was wiped out and were two ahead when lunch was taken at 23 for two. Donald, the South Africa fast bowler, soon had Manjrekar fending

to the slips, however, and forced Mongia to edge a catch to the wicketkeeper.

Sachin Tendulkar, the India captain, fell soon after lunch for seven, driving a slower ball from Brian McMillan to cover where Jonty Rhodes made no mistake. Mohammad Azharuddin and Rahul Dravid put on 44 for the fourth wicket when McMillan set India back again. In the penultimate day before tea, Symcox trapped Dravid leg before for 34. Sunil Joshi (13) and Jagavall Singh fell within the space of one run in the last session, bringing Laxman and Kumble together.

RECORDS FROM AHMEDABAD

INDIA: First Innings 223 (A Donald 4 for 37)

Second Innings

S V Manjrekar c Hudson b Donald	5
N V Mongia c Richardson b Donald	5
S R Tendulkar c Symcox b Donald	34
M Azharuddin c McMillan b Donald	13
V S Laxman not out	50
S Joshi c McMillan b Symcox	13
S Singh b De Villiers	17
A Kumble not out	22
Extras (b 4, lb 3)	11
Total (7 wickets)	172

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-10, 2-15, 3-38, 4-82, 5-91, 6-123, 7-124

BOWLING: Donald 15-3-32-3; De Villiers 19-4-51-1; McMillan 9-4-18-1; Symcox 19-4-37-2; Cronje 7-2-10-0; Adams 7-3-22-4.

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings

G Kirsten b Mongia	17
A C Hudson b Kumble	23
D J Cullinan b Joshi	43
J N Rhodes c Manjrekar b Joshi	14
J P Kallis b Joshi	4
T D Richardson b Manjrekar	4
P L Symcox b Joshi	22
P S de Villiers not out	67
A Donald b Joshi	17
R Dravid c Azharuddin b Singh	1
Extras (b 7, lb 5, nb 1)	13
Total	244

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-25, 2-46, 3-49, 4-85, 5-102, 6-113, 7-118, 8-182, 9-242

BOWLING: Symcox 18-1-71-2; Priest 9-2-24-0; Kumble 31-6-78-2; Joshi 24-4-43-4; Hansen 15-3-35-2.

Umpires: S A Barnes (India) and G Green (England).

Moin's half-century lifts Pakistan

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

NEW Zealand had edged 52 runs ahead of Pakistan with seven second-innings wickets in hand at the close of the second day of the first Test in Lahore yesterday. When poor light halted play eight overs early, the touring side were 88 for three with Stephen Fleming on 12 and Nathan Aspin on three.

Resuming on 52 for five, Pakistan established a modest first-innings lead of 36 by taking their total to 191. After an opening day on which 15 wickets tumbled, only eight batsmen fell yesterday as the pitch eased a little.

New Zealand batted more sensibly in their second innings with Bryan Young and Justin Vaughan compiling 46 for the first wicket. The stand was broken by Mushtaq Ahmed, who bowled Vaughan round his legs for 11. The

experienced leg spinner also claimed Young for 36, caught by Mohammad Wasim off bat and pad for 59.

Shortly before close of play, Saqlain Mushtaq, the off spinner, trapped Adam Parore leg before for 15 to end a satisfying day for Pakistan.

The home side added 139 runs for the loss of five wickets

before the last wicket fell 25 minutes after lunch. The overnight pair of Salim Malik and Moin Khan put on 48 for the sixth wicket before Simon Doull claimed his fifth wicket of the innings. He had Salim, on 11 overnight, brilliantly caught by Young at second slip for 21 with the score on 85.

Moin emerged as the top

scorer with a gallant 59, his fourth half-century in 23 Tests. After the fall of Salim, Moin dominated a seventh-wicket stand of 56 in 18 overs with Saqlain before falling leg before to Vaughan. His knock contained 11 fours from 96 balls.

Saqlain made 23 and Mushtaq 25 as the last four wickets added a crucial 106 runs to take Pakistan past New Zealand's total. Both Doull and Vaughan finished with career-best figures, Doull taking five for 46 and Vaughan four for 27 on a pitch still favouring the bowlers.

Gavin Larsen has become the latest New Zealand player to leave the tour. Larsen sprained a hamstring in the nets on Thursday and no replacement has yet been decided. Danny Morrison, also a fast bowler, and Earle Cooper, the manager, have already returned home.

RECORDS FROM LAHORE

NEW ZEALAND: First Innings 155 (Wagner 4 for 59)

Second Innings

B A Young c Mushtaq Ahmed	36
J C Vaughan b Mushtaq Ahmed	11
A C Parore b Saqlain	15
S P Fleming not out	12
N J Aspin not out	3
Extras (b 4, lb 7)	16
Total (5 wickets)	88

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-46, 2-59, 3-85, 4-137, 5-176

BOWLING: Mushtaq Ahmed 11-4-22-2; Saqlain 10-3-27-1; Wagner 10-3-27-1.

PAKISTAN: First Innings

Saqlain Ahmed b Doull	8
Zahir Shah c Fleming b Doull	22

Second Innings

Saqlain Ahmed b Doull	8
Zahir Shah c Fleming b Doull	22



Grist hopes to end his partnership with Kankkunen on a high note before teaming up with Colin McRae

Grist geared for new challenge

Oliver Holt meets the most important man not driving in the RAC Rally this year

THERE are some famous names on the list of absentees. Colin McRae, the outgoing world champion, will not be hurrying through the Welsh forests or trying to dodge disaster in Kielder, nor will Tommi Mäkinen, his successor, nor Carlos Sainz, twice the winner before. The most important person not driving in the Network Q RAC Rally this year, though, is a diminutive Welshman named Nicky Grist.

Grist, a man with the build of an oversized jockey, will be in the hot seat next to Juha Kankkunen, four times the world champion, trying to guide the Finn and their Toyota Celica to victory in an event denuded of many of the sport's top names because it is not part of the world championship programme this year.

However, more important for British fans deprived of McRae's presence, Grist was recently named as the Scot's co-driver for next season. He has been touted as the calming influence who will tame the wild man in McRae, who will be able to smooth away the erratic driving that returned to his performances this year and cost him the title.

After late-season wins in the San Remo and Catalunya rallies, McRae still managed to finish second in the world championship and bring the constructors' title to his Subaru team. By then, though, the damage had been done in a series of early exits. Derek Ringer, McRae's co-driver, was told that his services would not be required for 1997 and Grist was drafted in.

The RAC Rally, which starts in Chester today and ends there on Monday after 27 stages traversing northern England and the wilds of mid and north Wales, will be Grist's last with Kankkunen, with whom he won the world championship in 1993 in the first year of their partnership.

Grist is understandably cautious about talking of how he can improve McRae's driving, but he admits that he would not have agreed to partner McRae if he did not think that there was some potential for him to contribute to his performances, beyond just reading the pace notes that co-drivers use to guide drivers over blind hills and crests and round sharp corners.

"I think part of the way I can help Colin is simply through the fact that I will be a new face," Grist said. "He had been with Derek right from the beginning, and with

me coming in it will give him a bit of a change, a new approach. It will show how hard they are working and you can say, 'Let's just take it easy for a second here and see what the others are doing.' I hope I can take a bit of pressure off him, too, because he has got to the stage now where he is always expected to win."

"I haven't driven alongside him yet so it is difficult for me to say too much. All I would say is that Colin is the fastest rally driver in the world. Of that there is no doubt. When somebody is as fast as him, he does not need to go at full speed all the time in order to win."

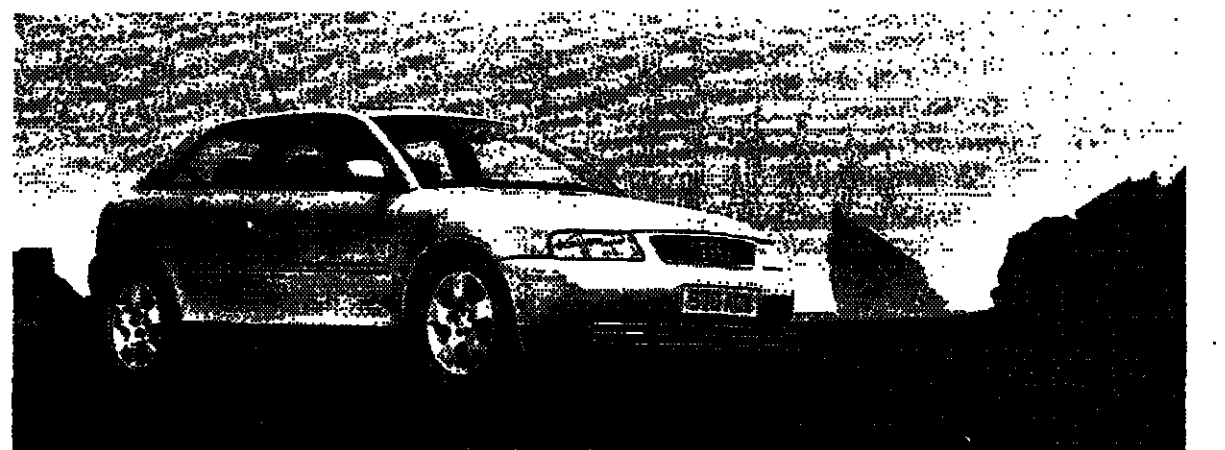
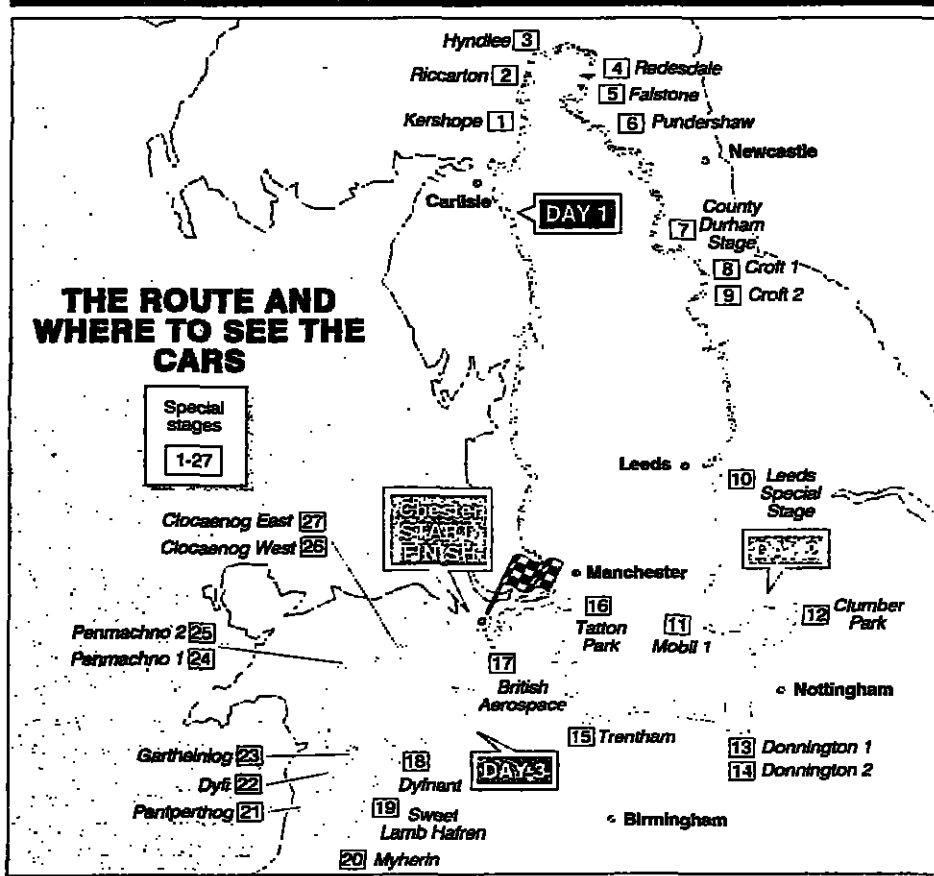
"As a co-driver, you know you could never drive at the

speed these guys drive, but you always have a sixth sense. You know how hard they are working and you can say, 'Let's just take it easy for a second here and see what the others are doing.' I hope I can take a bit of pressure off him, too, because he has got to the stage now where he is always expected to win."

"I would be absolutely delirious if I could make it into the top ten," he said. "But this sport is so hard. It is too hard. Every mile, there are about three chances to total the car. It is fine here, where you go a little bit wide you just run onto some grass, but I did not like the look of some of the sheer drops I saw in Wales on Wednesday."

1996 NETWORK Q RAC RALLY

START LOCATION	DISTANCE	FINISH LOCATION
Sat Nov 23 07.00	Chester racecourse	116 miles 22.15 Leeds Royal Armouries
Sun Nov 24 07.30	Leeds Royal Armouries	27 miles 17.45 Chester racecourse
Mon Nov 25 02.00	Chester racecourse	114 miles 16.30 Chester racecourse



You're test driving the new Audi A3. Do you:

- a) find a narrow ravine with a broken bridge, slam into second and leap the gap shouting 'Geronimo'?
- b) roar past a wall of fire at the side of the road to an eighties soundtrack?
- c) just go for a drive?

If your answer is (c) please call 0345 899777 for more information.



RUGBY UNION: TWICKENHAM OFFERS PERFECT STAGE FOR ENGLAND TO SHOW FACE OF FUTURE

New adventure story longing to be launched

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ADVENTURE is not a word normally associated with the England rugby union team — not, at any rate, since Will Carling's 1990 team met its Waterloo at Murrayfield — but the XV that will meet Italy at Twickenham today has been chosen with just that quality in mind. The prospect is ambitious yet, at the same time, daunting.

Leopards do not change their spots overnight. It is eight months since England last played an international, against Ireland, eight months since they won a somewhat colourless five nations' championship. Today, there are only eight survivors from that side, so the selectors will argue that a different philosophy has already been introduced.

Yet theory and practice are different things. The international arena is an unforgiving one and Italy include just the degree of experience to test England's young cubs to the full. They are a side full of purpose, intent on erasing the unhappy impression created on their last appearance here (the 1991 World Cup pool game, so littered with penalties) and creating their own history in pursuit of that elusive goal, a place in an enlarged version of the present five nations' championship.

However, there can be no doubt that this England is the one that Jack Rowell, the coach, seeks to create. During his two-year reign, he has often grumbled at the inheritance handed down to him; now, he has watched the development in the A team of ambitious newcomers such as Gomarsall, Stimpson and Shaw, has helped to oversee an attractive style of play, and now that must be translated to the top echelon.

The significant difference between then and now is that most of England's top clubs have embraced the need to play entertaining rugby, so more players are operating on the same wavelength.

It is possible to imagine a situation in which England strike a rich vein of form and a loose game in which the gifts of Mike Catt and Andy Gomarsall come into their own. Equally, Italy may seek a more formal, structured game for which they have had matches — albeit losing ones — against Australia and Wales this season to prepare.

Now that Massimo Giovanelli has recovered his best form, the captaincy is restored to him, and Italy have recalled Corrado Covi to the back row after a five-year absence, Giovannelli reclaims the leadership from Massimo Cutitta, the prop who plays his fiftieth international today against, coincidentally, Jason Leonard, who brings up his own half-century. "It's an honour to reach 50 caps, especially against Leonard," Cutitta said, but he also articulated Italy's main desire: "To join the five nations would be the best thing that could happen for us and we are all working very hard towards that aim."

Specifically, they will work

to break up the fledgling relationship at half back between Gomarsall and Catt, whose first game together this will be. They will try also to cut down the space close to set pieces that Gomarsall and his club colleagues in the back row, Lawrence Dallaglio and Chris Sheasby, will hope to exploit.

England go into the game without a proven goal-kicker. In training this week, Catt has answered most of the demands made on him, but Twickenham, with 50,000 people in it, will be a different matter. Catt is the most confident of players, with the disposition to shrug off misfortune, but there is no doubt that failure in one respect can have an insidious effect on the rest of a player's game. He may kick every chance that he is offered, he may not. There is no way of telling.

If England's plans bear fruit, of course, it will not matter. They will have found the space to use the long-striding Tim Stimpson from full back, in a way which they could not last season for Catt, and to send the bustling Adedayo Adebayo away. The understanding of the Bath backs will have come into play, and a new day will have dawned — but it is a big "if".

Gomarsall arrives with extended stay in view

David Hands meets an England new boy in no mood to relinquish his hard-won senior shirt

When Andy Gomarsall runs out at Twickenham today, mothers everywhere will avert their eyes rather than watch one who seems so unutterably young mixing it with a gang of nasty unshaven forwards — and those are only the members of his own England team, never mind the visitors from Italy, each of them intent on making Gomarsall's debut less than memorable.

Yet the maternal tendency has been here before — a year ago, it was the equally fresh-faced Matt Dawson making his debut and thereby hangs a moral for Gomarsall. England won a five nations' championship with Dawson and Paul Grayson, his Northampton partner, at half back, and now neither are in the senior squad — Gomarsall, having won selection against Italy, is determined to stay.

"I had a message from Melie [Nigel Melville], who said that this shouldn't be a one-off, this is my future and you have to think like that, take the bull by the horns," Gomarsall said. No man could have had a better mentor. Melville, now director of rugby at Wasps, was perhaps the most natural scrum-half of his generation, as well as a player who captained England in his first international.

Gomarsall's appearance today completes a set of internationals at every age level, from his days at Bedford School via captaincy of a grand-slam winning 18 Group schools side in 1992 and seven appearances for England A last year and this. There is, then, more to him than meets the eye, the effervescent personality of the 22-year-old student masking a determination to reach the top.

There is strength in that sturdy 13st 8lb frame, speed off the mark that can so easily catch defences napping, and, above all, the confidence to take decisions. Yet selection as one of five newcomers caught him by surprise. "I've been



Gomarsall practises "doing the simple things well" in 1996

around the squad for two years now and every time selection I've turned up hoping I would be in, but I haven't been," he said. "That was partly through not having a firm place at Wasps, but I felt this year could be my year."

"The club has been playing well, I have got on tremendously well with Alex [King] at stand-off, but, coming to the team meeting a fortnight ago, I told myself that I would miss out again — I didn't want to be let down. When I heard I couldn't believe it, but the surprise was mingled with relief, because I've been waiting for it for so long."

Gomarsall's appetite was

whetted last year, when he found himself flown from Australia, where England were touring, to join England before their World Cup quarter-final with Australia. Injury and illness threatened that

Morris, a 19-year-old Kyrren Braden, the senior scrum-half, and the young Wasps scrum-half, who had been occupying place that would have belonged to Dawson had he not just been consigned to the bench while playing against Queensland.

"It was a wonderful experience, even though I wasn't needed," Gomarsall said. "The actual experience of meeting people of knowing

'This is my future — you have to think like that'

ENGLAND	ITALY
T R G Stimpson (Newcastle)	15 J Perille (Rome)
J M Steighmohr (Bath)	14 P Vaccari (Caltanico)
W D C Carling (Harlequins)	13 S Bordon (Rovigo)
P R de Glanville (Bath)	12 I Francescato (Treviso)
A A Adebayo (Bath)	11 L Marletti (Treviso)
M J Catt (Bath)	10 D Dominguez (Milan)
A C T Gomarsall (Wasps)	9 A Troncon (Treviso)
G C Howarth (Leicester)	8 M Cutitta (Milan)
M P Regin (Bristol)	7 C Orlandi (Milan)
J Leonard (Leicester)	6 F Prosser (Catt Milan)
T A K Roddy (Northampton)	5 M Giovanelli (PUG)
M O Johnson (Leicester)	4 W Cristofaletto (Treviso)
S D Shaw (Bristol)	3 C Checchinato (Treviso)
L B M Dallaglio (Wasps)	2 C Covi (Padova)
C M A Sheasby (Wasps)	1 O Arancio (Milan)
Replacements: P de Luca (Argentina)	
Replacements: 16 J C Guscott (Bath), 17 A D King (Wasps), 18 K P Braden (Bristol), 19 M E Cury (Bristol), 20 R J K Hardwick (Coventry), 21 P B T Greening (Gloucester)	Replacements: 16 A Castelletti (Treviso), 17 A Barattin (Treviso), 18 A Scortin (Treviso), 19 G Guidi (Livorno), 20 A Scarnavacca (Rovigo), 21 M Mazzucato (CUS Padova)

Irish hope memories will rekindle fires of old

FROM CHRISTOPHER IRVINE IN DUBLIN



Wood: new captain

IRELAND require a reminder of the obvious frailties exposed 12 days ago by Western Samoa like a patient needs a relapse. A soft Irish underbelly is not noticeably stronger for nine changes to the side. Whatever team was chosen, Australia would still be runaway favourites at Lansdowne Road today.

Memories of the 1991 World Cup quarter-final in Dublin are being stirred. That day, too, ended in defeat by Australia, one of five since Ireland last beat them at home, in 1968. It took a last-minute try to kill off Ireland. For all that the present Australia team are not what they were five years ago, Ireland have retreated a long way.

Keith Wood might admire the difference as captain for the first time. He appreciates that passion alone is

insufficient. "We need to bluff, bash and swarm all over them, but you can't rely on Trojan rugby," Wood said. "We've to be positive and run the ball, because you can't simply wear down Australia."

Old-fashioned set-piece rugby accounted for a sluggish Scotland two weeks ago, and against a pack as small and immobile as Ireland's, the same tactics would prove effective. However, with the forecast cold and crisp, the opportunity for the Australia ball players to express themselves on an unbeaten but unsatisfactory tour would be too good to miss.

The Australians were locked out yesterday as Ireland did their tour of inspection at the ground. If the same happens today, and Ireland can nudge away at close quarters, then the worst fears might be confounded.

What Murray Kidd, Ireland's New

Zealand coach, identified as the need for cool-headed decision making hinges on the untested combination at half back of Paul Burke, on his return, and Stephen McIvor, one of two new caps, at scrum-half.

Even a little wit and invention from them would represent progress after the dispiriting 40-25 defeat by Samoa, but, in the lineout especially, Ireland's main problem will be securing possession. Wood, for all his fine skills as a hooker in other areas, has his problems throwing in at the lineout.

Eales and Waugh, the Australia totems, are far too good for Wood not to get his aim right. Around the fringes, Ireland's job must be one of containing, for, if the Australia forwards do connect with their backs, it might be an embarrassment.

Eales, the Australia captain, said: "In 1991, we had the fright of our lives

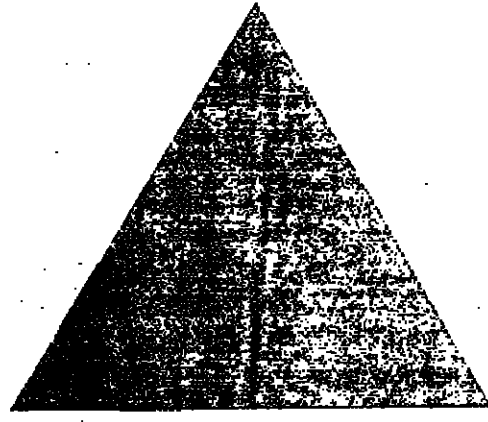
here, so we'd be stupid to imagine Ireland won't be highly charged. Five years ago, we had the likes of Lyne and Farr-Jones to pull us out of trouble. This side is now starting to develop in similar lines."

At half back, Grogan and Knowles are no Farr-Jones and Lyne, yet they are still superior to anything that Ireland possess. Outside them, Australia battle with flair, so much so that the vacancy for Jason Little, after a year in a decompression chamber to help heal a knee ligament injury, is of the right wing, where he last played as a schoolboy, and David Campese remains on the bench.

Asked by Little for a few more Campese smiled and then under a tearfully buttoned his new shirt. "If misfortune strikes Little or that the wings this afternoon, his international career is probably over."



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THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

ARSENAL

On form, Arsenal should beat Tottenham, but their heavy three-man defence could have trouble against Anderton and Sinton. Neither team has much craft in midfield, so much will depend on the duel between Ian Wright, Arsenal's opportunist, and the powerful new England centre back, Sol Campbell, of Tottenham. But Sheringham will hardly be as profligate again as he was last week against Sunderland — Arsenal must watch him carefully as he snaps up unconsidered trifles. BG

ASTON VILLA

Dwight Yorke misses the Midlands derby against Coventry today, because of international duty with Trinidad and Tobago, but perhaps the stage is set for Savo Milosevic to rise from the ashes of his aborted £4.5 million move to Perugia. His Italian job eventually collapsed, even though Villa agreed a ten per cent discount on the original asking price, and he is now back, fit and available. He scored five goals in two games against Coventry last season — dare Brian Little use him? RK

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Nine, plead Blackburn, *nein* reply the Premiership. Rovers want special dispensation to allow Chris Sutton to wear the No 9 shirt vacated by Alan Shearer. The Premiership has resisted because it is against the rules to change numbers mid-season. Jack Walker, however, has become involved, and he is hardly a man to mess with. Neither is Graeme Le Saux, who returns after missing the game against Chelsea, when he felt pain from the ankle he shattered a year ago. DM

CHELSEA

Franck Leboeuf should return in defence, possibly to face a returning Alan Shearer, and Gianfranco Zola will make his first home appearance before an expectant crowd. The game will be watched by an Italian coach, Nando Simoes, until last summer the manager of Parma, and a possible candidate for the managership of the Italian national team. He says that he wants to see his ex-Parma players, Zola and Faustino Asprilla, of Newcastle, in opposition. BG

COVENTRY CITY

Bryan Richardson, the Coventry chairman, has announced a pay freeze at Highfield Road until results pick up. No increase in the lads' basic wages while they continue to hurdle towards the Nationwide League first division. Gordon Strachan, the manager, is getting tough, too, as he attempts to stir his overpaid yet underperforming players from their slumber. "Do things my way or there will be changes," he said. Got the message, boys? RK

DERBY COUNTY

Derby could be without Igor Stimac, the club captain, until the new year. The Croatia international defender saw a specialist in London this week, and Jim Smith, the manager, believes that Stimac will have to undergo a hernia operation, keeping him out for six weeks. "We are fearing the worst but at least we are not totally lost without him," Smith said. In the absence of the suspended Stimac, Derby have won their last two games, with Dean Yates deputising magnificently. RH

EVERTON

After their draw at Anfield, extending their unbeaten run to six games, Everton are still on a high. To make things even better for Joe Royle, the manager, his injury list is improving. Another striker is on the way back, Paul Rideout playing for the reserves on Thursday, but Rideout has no illusions about a prompt return. Ferguson may well get back in today — Kanchelskis, who went off with influenza on Wednesday to let Ferguson off the bench, is the main doubt. PB

LEEDS UNITED

Leeds go to Southampton still looking for their first point away from home under George Graham and still waiting for a new signing or three to boost their struggling squad. Graham went abroad during the week in pursuit of players. "It would be lovely to come back and say we've seen a player we really like and sign him," Graham said, "but it doesn't work like that." In the meantime he is waiting to see if Rod Wallace is fit to play against his old club. PB

LEICESTER CITY

Is there a bad time to secure a place in your national side? Kasey Keller thinks so. He has spent seven years trying to prove himself the United States' leading goalkeeper and now, having done that, he is upset at having to miss games with Leicester. So, after the World Cup qualifying match against Trinidad and Tobago tomorrow, Keller will fly back for the Coca-Cola Cup tie against Manchester United next Wednesday before returning to face Guatemala four days later. RH

LIVERPOOL

Previously accused of over-passing, now Liverpool are condemned for not passing enough against Everton. Guilty? Only half-guilty, according to John Barnes. "We never said we over-passed, because you can never pass the ball too much," he said, "but we need to find our passing rhythm against Wimbledon. That's the way to beat them." McManaman is out with a hamstring problem. Collymore will deputise and, according to Roy Evans, "he still has a future at Anfield". Sure. DM

MANCHESTER UNITED

United are paying the penalty for that stirring performance against Juventus. Ryan Giggs, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Gary Neville have all joined a lengthening injury list. On Wednesday United were down to four fit defenders, leaving them without a defender on the bench. Today with the loss of both Nevilles, the situation is even worse, but it is an opportunity for John O'Kane, who was called back yesterday from Bury, where he has been on loan for a month. PB

MIDDLESBROUGH

Emerson, still suspended, will watch the home meeting with Manchester United today from the stands. Having spent the week scowling, everyone wonders if the Brazilian, apparently now staying put at Middlesbrough, might manage a smile. Meanwhile, Bryan Robson, the manager, has declared his determination to rebuild Middlesbrough along the lines of Juventus. Phil Stamp is fit to return after injury although Nigel Pearson, the captain, is again out with neck trouble. LT

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Alan Shearer is fit and ready to play against Chelsea today after surgery on his groin, but he had one question for journalists yesterday. "Who says the manager will pick me?" Nice try, Alan, but a £15 million man ready to resume and only on the bench? Not likely. Shearer, who has missed Newcastle's last six games, will start, and it could be that Kevin Keegan will return to a three-man defence to accommodate him. It promises to be a wonderful contest. DM

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

When Forest were relegated from the Premiership in 1993, they missed the injured Stuart Pearce for much of the run-in. They can ill afford to be without their captain as they try to avoid a repeat. Frank Clark, the manager, said as much when he responded to the suggestion of David Pleat, the Sheffield Wednesday manager, that Pearce, 34, was "on his knees" by the end of the defeat at Hillsborough last Monday. "Stuart remains an inspirational figure for us," Clark said. RH

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

Their first win since September 2, and David Pleat has to change the side immediately — galling, particularly as it is red tape and not injury that forces Regi Blinker out. Scott Oakes will deputise. An alarming decline arrested, the game against Sunderland is nonetheless important because it is between teams likely to be struggling at the wrong end of the table come the season's end. "We have to be looking to pick up points from matches like these," Pleat said, with heavy significance. DM

SUNDERLAND

Peter Reid, the manager, is poised to sign Ronen Harazi, an Israeli international forward, for £400,000. Harazi, 26, and the scorer of 18 goals in 36 international matches, is presently with Beitar Jerusalem. Reid has also had Gary Sundgren, a Swedish defender, on trial along with Viktor Leonenko, of the Ukraine. None of them, of course, are eligible to face Sheffield Wednesday at Roker Park today when the less exotic Steve Agnew is likely to return to midfield. LT

HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal diff	Last five
1 Newcastle	13	28	+10	WWLWD
2 Liverpool	13	27	+11	LWLWD
3 Arsenal	13	25	+13	WDWDL
4 Wimbledon	13	24	+9	WWDWD
5 Chelsea	13	23	+4	WLWWD
6 Manchester Utd	13	22	+5	WLLWW
7 Everton	13	20	+8	WWWDW
8 Tottenham	13	20	+3	WWWDW
9 Sheffield Wed	13	19	-2	LDWWL
10 Aston Villa	13	18	+2	LWLWL
11 Derby	13	17	-1	LDLWW
12 Leicester	13	17	-4	LDLWL
13 West Ham	13	15	-5	LWLWL
14 Southampton	13	13	-2	DWWDL
15 Middlesbrough	13	13	-5	LDLWL
16 Sunderland	13	13	-7	LDLWL
17 Leeds	13	13	-9	WLLWL
18 Coventry	13	10	-10	DDDDD
19 Blackburn	13	8	-6	LDLWD
20 Nottm Forest	13	8	-12	LDLLL

SOUTHAMPTON

"One we have to forget," Graeme Souness, the manager, said of the 7-1 defeat at Everton last week. "We know what we did wrong, and we are looking to bounce straight back. We have a lot of making up to do to our fans." Bruised egos would be soothed by beating Leeds, although there are injury doubts about defenders Dryden and Charlton. Omen? In the 1971-72 season, Southampton lost 8-0 at Everton, but beat Leeds 2-1 at the Dell (and went down 7-0 at Elland Road). NS

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

All eyes on Highbury tomorrow for the latest resumption in north London hostilities. The key match-up could be Sol Campbell, Tottenham defender, versus Ian Wright, Arsenal striker — goalkeeper against goalscorer, beauty against beast. "Sol's so strong and reads the game so well," Ian Walker, Campbell's colleague, said. "Ian's on a hot streak at the moment but if anyone can stop him, Sol can." Spurs and Arsenal share the best defensive record in the Premiership, but don't bet on 0-0.RK

WEST HAM UNITED

Croat opposes Croat for the first time in the Premiership today as Slaven Bilic lines up against Derby and Asanovic. "He is my friend and a quality player," Bilic said. "Our families got together last week. But I think we will win. We are not any more the soft side who plays Mickey Mouse football." Harry Redknapp, the manager, must decide whether to change the side that battled superbly to draw at Newcastle now that Porfirio and Lazaridis are back. Raducioiu and Rowland are at risk. KP

Reports: Brian Glanville, Peter Ball, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Louise Taylor, Nick Szczepanski, Keith Pike, David Maddock. Statistics: Julian Desborough

WIMBLEDON

As Wimbledon head for Anfield, where their record bears comparison with any (Joe Kinnear has tasted defeat in only two of 11 meetings with Liverpool as the Wimbledon manager), the rude health of the club as a whole can be judged by the arrival of their reserves at the top of the Avon Insurance Combination. The mainly homegrown second string reflects the success of the club's youth development. The policy is that as few first-team squad members appear as possible. NS

CHELSEA v NEWCASTLE UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-3, 2-2, 1-1, 1-0, 1-1, 1-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

CHELSEA (from): F. Grodas, D. Petrescu, S. Minto, M. Duberry, F. Leboeuf, C. Burley, R. Di Matteo, G. Zola, D. Wise, G. Vialli, M. Hughes, R. Gullit, S. Clarke, E. Newton, F. Sinclair, T. Phelan, N. Colgan.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): P. Snicek, W. Barton, D. Peacock, P. Albert, J. Berastord, R. Elliott, K. Gillespie, D. Batty, R. Lee, D. Girdle, P. Beardsley, F. Asprilla, A. Shearer, S. Watson, L. Clark, P. Kilton, S. Hishop.

COVENTRY CITY v ASTON VILLA

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 2-1, 2-0, 2-1, 1-0, 3-0, 0-1, 0-1, 0-3

HOW THEY LINE UP

COVENTRY CITY (from): S. Ogilvy, R. Shaw, D. Burrows, P. Williams, L. Dalish, P. Ndlovu, E. Jess, G. McAllister, J. Salako, D. Dublin, N. Whelan, K. Richardson, J. Filar, M. Isailas, D. Borrows, W. Boland, D. Huckerby.

ASTON VILLA (from): M. Oakes, F. Nelson, A. Wright, U. Ejiogu, C. Tiler, S. Staunton, G. Southgate, A. Townsend, S. Curcio, I. Taylor, M. Draper, T. Johnson, J. Joachim, S. Milosevic, G. Farrelly, R. Schmeick, M. Rachel.

LEICESTER CITY v EVERTON

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 0-2, 2-2, 1-1, 2-2, 1-1, 1-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

LEICESTER CITY (from): K. Poole, S. Grayson, M. Whitlow, J. Watts, S. Prior, S. Walsh, N. Lannan, S. Taylor, S. Clendage, M. Izuel, E. Heskey, G. Parker, I. Marshall, C. Hill, J. Lawrence, N. Lewis, P. Hyde, S. Campbell, S. Wilson.

EVERTON (from): N. Southall, E. Barrett, A. Hinchcliffe, D. Unsworth, D. Watson, A. Kanchelskis, A. Grant, J. Parkinson, G. Speed, G. Stuart, N. Barry, M. Branch, C. Short, G. Allen, G. Gerrard, A. Linper.

LIVERPOOL v WIMBLEDON

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-2, 2-1, 1-1, 2-1, 1-1, 2-3, 2-3, 1-1, 3-0, 2-2

HOW THEY LINE UP

LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, J. McAleer, S. I. Bignall, M. Wright, N. Ruddock, D. Mellis, J. Barnes, J. Redknapp, M. Thomas, R. Fowler, S. Collymore, P. Berger, M. Kennedy, A. Warner, P. Babb.

WIMBLEDON (from): N. Sullivan, K. Cunningham, A. Kimble, V. Jones, D. Blackwell, C. Perry, O. Leonardson, R. Earle, D. Holdsworth, A. Clarke, M. Gayle, P. Fear, E. Ekoku, N. Ardley, M. Harford, A. Reeves, J. Goodman, S. McAllister, S. Murphy.

MIDDLESBROUGH v MANCHESTER UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-0, 1-0, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 0-3

HOW THEY LINE UP

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G. Woods, K. Monkou, U. van Gooel, C. Lundekvam, A. Neilson, J. Magilton, R. Slater, E. Berkovic, M. Oakley, M. Le Tissier, E. Osenstad, J. Dock, D. Bessant, F. Berrill, N. Maddison, G. Potter.

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P. Schmeichel, J. O'Kane, D. May, R. Johnson, G. Neville, C. Casper, D. Beckham, R. Keane, N. Butt, R. Gigg, E. Cantoria, O. G. Solskjaer, K. Poborsky, J. Cruyff, B. McClair, M. Clegg, R. Wallwork, T. Cooke, B. Thornley, R. van der Gouw.

SOUTHAMPTON v LEEDS UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-0, 2-0, 0-4, 1-1, 0-2, 1-3, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

SOUTHAMPTON (from): G. Woods, K. Monkou, U. van Gooel, C. Lundekvam, A. Neilson, J. Magilton, R. Slater, E. Berkovic, M. Oakley, M. Le Tissier, E. Osenstad, J. Dock, D. Bessant, F. Berrill, N. Maddison, G. Potter.

LEEDS UNITED (from): N. Marlyn, G. Kelly, C. Palmer, P. Beesley, D. Wetherall, I. Radcliffe, I. Rush, M. Ford, L. Bowyer, L. Sharpe, R. Wallace, S. Deane, A. Couzens, M. Jackson, R. Harle, M. Beasley.

SUNDERLAND v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-0, 1-0, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

SUNDERLAND (from): L. Perez, G. Hall, D. Kubicki, A. Melville, M. Scott, D. Kelly, S. Agnew, P. Bracewell, K. Ball, M. Gray, P. Stewart, M. Bridges, C. Russell, A. Ross, D. Pearce, M. Smith.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K. Pressman, P. Atherton, I. Nolan, M. Pemberton, D. Walker, J. Newsome, G. Hyde, S. Carbone, A. Booth, O. Trustell, D. Stefanovic, G. Whittingham, R. Humphreys, S. Celis, O. Donaldson, L. Briscoe.

WEST HAM UNITED v DERBY COUNTY

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

WEST HAM UNITED (from): L. Miodoski, T. Braacker, S. Bile, S. Potts, J. Dicko, M. Hughes, I. Bishop, J. Moncur, K. Rowland, I. Dowie, F. Raducioiu, H. Porfirio, S. Lazaridis, P. Fure, P. Shilton, M. Bower.

DERBY COUNTY (from): R. Hout, G. Rowett, C. Powell, S. Fryer, D. Yeates, P. McGrath, J. Laursen, C. Dally, D. Summidge, A. Asanovic, A. Ward, D. Powell, L. Carsey, P. Simpson, M. Taylor, R. Williams, M. Carbon.

LEADING SCORERS

10: I. Wright (Arsenal), 9: M. Le Tissier (Southampton), F. Ravanelli (Middlesbrough), 7: L. Ferdinand (Newcastle United), A. Shearer (Newcastle United), 6: D. Yorke (Aston Villa), G. Vialli (Chelsea), G. Speed (Everton), M. Gayle (Wimbledon), R. Earle (Wimbledon), E. Ekoku (Wimbledon), 5: R. Fowler (Liverpool), A. Booth (Sheffield Wednesday), C. Armstrong (Tottenham Hotspur).

TOMORROW ARSENAL v TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 2-1, 2-0, 1-0, 0-0, 2-0, 1-3, 1-1, 1-1, 0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP

ARSENAL (from): J. Lull, L. Dixon, A. Adams, S. Bould, N. Winterburn, P. Merson, M. Keown, D. Platt, P. Vieira, I. Wright, D. Bergkamp, L. Harper, A. Linighan, R. Parlor, S. Morrow, P. Shaw, J. Harrison.

TOTTENHAM (from): I. Walker, S. Carr, C. Calderwood, S. Campbell, C. Wilson, D. Anderton, D. Howells, A. Nielsen, A. Sinton, C. Armstrong, E. Sheringham, R. Rosenthal, J. Edinburgh, R. Allen, S. Nethroft.

MONDAY NOTTINGHAM FOREST v BLACKBURN ROVERS

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Croesley, D. Lytle, C. Cooper, S. Blatherwick, S. Pearce, D. Phillips, N. Jerkin, A. I. Hasland, I. Wan, K. Campbell, D. Saunders, C. Allen, A. Fettes, J. Lee, S. Roy, S. Howe.

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T. Flowers, J. Kanne, C. Hendry, M. Barg, G. Croft, W. McKinley, T. Sherwood, G. Pittorff, J. Wilcox, G. Sutton, K. Gallacher, R. Bohinen, N. Marker, S. Given, G. Le Saux.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

10.45pm BBC1 Match of the Day (Highlights)

11am Sky Sports 1 Goals on Sunday
2pm Sky Sports 1 Ford Escort Super Sunday
Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur (live)
Midday
7pm Sky Sports 1 Ford Monday Night Football
Nottingham Forest v Blackburn Rovers (live)

Neilles pl
Ferguson
defensiv
dilemma

DE READING

FREE
NET ON

FOOTBALL

Nevilles put Ferguson in defensive dilemma

By Peter Ball

AFTER Vialli, Boksic, after Boksic, Ravanelli — present and former Juventus strikers are lining up to face Manchester United at the moment. This afternoon it is Ravanelli's turn as United travel to the Riverside Stadium with a seriously under-strength defence.

They are also without Solskjaer and Giggs from the side that tested Juventus on Wednesday. Solskjaer, injuring his knee and Giggs twisting an ankle in their efforts. But the loss of Gary Neville, who joins his brother with a hamstring injury, means that they have four defenders missing injured.

"I'm all right in midfield and up front," Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said yesterday. "I've got plenty of options — Poborsky and Jordi Cruyff can come in, and Ben Thornley, but it's at the back."

John O'Kane, the latest graduate of the great youth team of Beckham, Scholes, Butt and the Nevilles, has been recalled from his loan at Bury, where he made quite a mark, and he will make his full debut at left back. "I'll have to think about who plays at right back," Ferguson said. One answer may be to play Keane as one of a back three, with Beckham filling his recent England role as a wing-back.

With their progress in Europe now on a knife-edge, United need to keep winning in the FA Cup Premier-ship. Their first visit to the Riverside Stadium was a memorable one, their win giving them the Premiership on the last day of last season.

"We only needed to draw them," Ferguson pointed out. Middlesbrough also did not have Ravanelli then, although Emerson's suspension will not help the home side, who have taken only two points from the past seven games. With a Coca-Cola Cup tie against

Newcastle United on Wednesday, Middlesbrough need to improve quickly.

"We have been improving," Bryan Robson, the manager, claimed, "and this is a good game for the boys to get back to winning. We can turn our season round in four or five days now. These are two big games at home, and our fans will be up for them."

After failing to beat Everton on Wednesday, when a win would have taken them clear at the top, Liverpool have difficult visitors again today, when Wimbledon arrive at Anfield. They will have to cope without Steve McManaman, another hamstring victim, with Stan Collymore likely to be given his chance to reclaim a first-team place.

The draw extended Everton's unbeaten run to six games. They face a testing trip today to Leicester City, who should go into the game full of confidence after beating their last visitors, Newcastle.

Everton are awaiting news on Kanchelskis, who has had flu. He is expected to play, leaving Duncan Ferguson to start on the bench at a ground where he was sent off on his last visit. However, an unchanged team means that Tony Grant will definitely play.

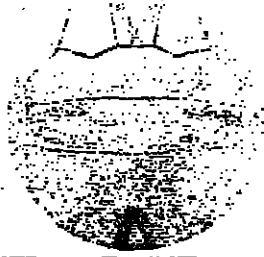
Yesterday he was given an extended 3½-year contract. "He's as good as anyone in Glenn Hoddle's squad," Joe Royle, the Everton manager, enthused. "Now he has got to find the consistency to do it all the time."

Sunderland have signed Rouan Harati, the Israeli striker, for £400,000 from Beitar Jerusalem, although he will not be available until just before Christmas. In the meantime, Craig Russell may return as Sunderland try to end their run of only one goal in their past four Premiership games against Sheffield Wednesday this afternoon.

Analyst in the right position to cure back problems

MARK LAWRENSON

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL



By Andrew Longmore

The man who could bring the coveted FA Cup Premiership title to Newcastle United will not be playing at Stamford Bridge today nor, in case you are thinking of Alan Shearer, will he play for the rest of the season. Mark Lawrenson would not presume to have such influence himself. "Just tinkering," he calls his new role as Newcastle's defensive co-ordinator. But if Lawrenson can tighten a bolt here and there, hammer in a few rivets from his own distinguished career, Newcastle's leaky title ship will begin to look as watertight as a Tynemouth tanker.

Kevin Keegan, the manager, used a different analogy when tempting Lawrenson out of his pundit's armchair. "Kevin said: 'Mark, we've put the roof on, the support walls are up, but I ain't so sure about the foundations.' That's a good way of looking at it." Lawrenson spoke to Keegan on the day Newcastle beat Manchester United 5-0. "To be honest, I would have said 'yes' there and then, but I thought about it for a couple of days. He rang me on Tuesday and I told him a) you don't need me, and b) I'd better come."

And that was that. Lawrenson was back on board, almost six years after he had left Peterborough United for the easy life of the analyst on BBC Radio 5 Live ("You're right there, Ron")



Lawrenson, right, has brought his defensive nous to Keegan's attacking side

and Sky television. His expertise will not be completely lost to listeners and it has helped the transition that Vic Wakeling, head of Sky Sport, was brought up at St James' Park. "He was delighted for me," Lawrenson said. "He said there would still be a job for me the day after they sacked me."

The other problem was how the team would react. Lawrenson's reputation as one of the most accomplished defenders in the league was not much use ten years on. All the Newcastle players had to judge him by were the harsh words of that despised breed, the footballer-turned-critic. "I'd given them some stick for

losing the league last season and I thought I could be in for some uncomfortable moments, but the players have been as good as gold," he said. "They want to learn. They've had a summer of people telling them what a great side they were, but they should have won the league and they want to put that right."

In a really strange way, the very appointment has made them think a bit more. It's not the fact that it's me. They [the defenders] know Kevin doesn't worry too much about defence, so they think they can get away with it. I'm just there to stop bad habits. Like what? "Positioning when we haven't got the ball. I'll say to

knowledge that, sooner or later, the roundhead and cavalier will clash.

The potential battleground is not hard to spot, either: Philippe Albert, so elegant going forward, such a liability when he does so; a gambler's defender, a coach's nightmare. Lawrenson, who feels defending is an art in limbo rather than lost, sees the Belgian as a prototype, strong in the tackle, comfortable on the ball, the sort of defender England will start producing when the subtle changes in the rules and the influence of gifted foreign strikers have seeped through.

"Philippe can defend," Lawrenson said. "No problem. It's easy for him and when he just does that defensive job he's outstanding. Then the trumpets come out and he's off. Tally ho. I've said to him: 'That's alright when we're winning 4-0, but when it's tight, you've got to be disciplined.' He knows it."

But what of Lawrenson himself, all those cold mornings on the training ground, the forgotten tensions of winning and losing? His elo-

'We can defend. That's not a problem. It's the timing of the defending'

quence and wit had ensured a comfortable future behind the microphone, where you can not lose games. "There are not many jobs I'd have come back for," he said. "I never looked for one. But I missed the fresh air and the banter. It's good to get the buzz back."

Besides, Lawrenson's appointment completes a neat footballing circle. Keegan claims Lawrenson put him out of the game. "He was playing for Newcastle at Anfield and a ball was knocked in," Lawrenson said. "He had about five yards' start and I caught him in about ten. He apparently came in to the dressing-room afterwards, threw his boots down and told the manager it was time to pack in. Good judge."

"I didn't tell him till later that as he was 32 and I was 26, I'd have packed in if I couldn't beat him over ten yards." Thirteen years on, the pair are still at it on the five-a-side pitch. "He plays, but he's finished," Lawrenson said. "You know when people keep telling you how great they are, you know they're finished."

IN BRIEF

Jansher in successful defence of world title

JANSHER KHAN'S march into the record books continued yesterday when he advanced his world open championship total to eight titles by defeating Rodney Eyles of Australia, 15-13, 17-15, 11-5, 15-3 in a 71-minute final in Karachi.

Jansher, of Pakistan, was taking another step towards his ambition of overhauling the achievement of his compatriot, Jahangir Khan, by winning ten world opens. "I want to play on until I am about 32," Jansher, 27, said. "I hope to end up with 11 or 12 world open wins."

Scotland second

Golf: Ernie Els and Wayne Westner, of South Africa, both birdied the final hole on the second day of the World Cup of Golf at Somerset West, South Africa, yesterday to lead Scotland by one stroke. Denmark and France are joint-third, four strokes further back. Paul Lawrie, of Scotland, shares top spot in the individual standings with Bernhard Langer.

Hill joins Havant

Hockey: Robert Hill, Great Britain's top scorer with six goals at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, has rejoined Havant, who are bottom of the National League premier division after ten defeats in succession. Havant are at home to Surbiton tomorrow.

Britain level

Tennis: Megan Miller beat Karin Ptaszek 6-0, 1-6, 6-3 to give Britain a 1-0 lead over Denmark in the first division of the European women's team championship at Barking, Essex, yesterday. However, Denmark drew level when Sam Smith lost 3-6, 7-6, 7-6 to Sofie Albinus.

Prean ruled out

Table tennis: Carl Prean, the England No 2, was forced to withdraw from the French open championships in Lyons yesterday because of a wrist injury. Prean was out for six months after having surgery to correct a similar injury three years ago.

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Travel period extended until August 1997. Eurostar will honour all valid free ticket applications, despite the temporary suspension of services caused by the closure of the Channel Tunnel. In addition, Eurostar has agreed to extend the time the offer can be taken up by four months to August 31, 1997. This extension includes the popular summer holiday months. As the authorities have not yet announced the reopening of the Channel Tunnel for Eurostar services, it is possible that availability of travel on free tickets



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TENNIS 50

Kafelnikov falls short of final summit

SPORT

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23 1996

RUGBY UNION 51

Italy prepare themselves for Twickenham charge



London stages the main events as Shearer gets back on his feet

Wenger worried by cheap imports

By Rob Hughes, Football Correspondent

LONDON is burning, at last, with ambition to bring football's prizes south, rather than to be the city that charges its customers the most for watching their games. Today, Chelsea have the baptism at the Bridge of Gianfranco Zola to match the return for Newcastle United of Alan Shearer, back on his £15 million feet so soon after major surgery.

Tomorrow, the north London derby pits Arsenal, third in the FA Carling Premiership, against Tottenham Hotspur, who are eighth. This time their intense rivalry has to come second to the fact that these two clubs, each of which has lost only once in more than a month, intend to play and buy their way into Europe.

Nor should one forget Wimbledon's capacity to travel north to Anfield and, with the audacity to match their shoe-string wiles, to hold back the Liverpool surge to regain the championship. That leaves only West Ham United out of the top sphere, but West Ham bring Europe to London every week, albeit from the cheap side of the European bargain counters.

What is fascinating about all this is that the capital,

Arsenal," he observed. "But for me the danger facing your football is that English players could become outnumbered in the best clubs by foreigners. I'm not the best person to speak, because I am foreign. But the financial situation is against English players. Every manager will tell you that, in the Premiership, English players cost too much compared to talents from the Continent. The salaries are the same, but the transfer fees are exaggerated. If, for example, Alan Shearer, who cost £15 million, lived in France, he would, at the end of his contract, be available for nothing."

"It is an incredible situation. It is as if in football the whole of Europe is one, and because England has protected its transfer system, where abroad it has fallen down, the future in, say, ten years' time, could be the best clubs in England playing with seven or eight foreigners... like Chelsea today."

Looking inward, Wenger acknowledges that he has brought innovation to the Arsenal training, and innovation to himself. "I always played before with a flat four at the back," he said. "But the players I have at Arsenal include three very good, very adaptable centre halves. So we play three at the back, and when people say that I have old players, I prefer the word experienced. I tell you, on my training ground, they are really good technical players, and I think also intelligent, because for men to be winners for ten or even 12 years, as these have been, you cannot achieve that without intelligence."

He plays on words, indeed on words in a language foreign to him. Suggest that he has already enlightened Arsenal with a more creative style, and Wenger responds: "Creative, to me, is scoring goals. We should have enough players to be creative already within the Arsenal squad."

But, surely, he has added to that with Patrick Vieira, a French countryman whose perceptive eye for the through-ball and whose timely runs bring to Arsenal a vision and a beauty lacking in the coarse triumphs of George Graham. "Beauty for me is efficiency, and it's not just making nice movements," the Arsenal manager insists. "Vieira is first an efficient player — the crowd loves him not because he is aesthetic, not because what he does is nice, but because he does the right thing at the right moment."

Wenger, surprised to be asked if there is a gulf between the upstairs of Arsenal's boardroom and the downstairs of the dressing-room, says that he has found only a unity and that, together with the captain, Tony Adams, the board and the staff are enthused with the same ambition.

Tomorrow afternoon, without David Seaman, the goalkeeper, whose rib injury is not a serious fracture but whose pain Wenger declines to try to

mask with injections, Arsenal have what the manager suggests is more than just a derby match. "When I was manager at Monaco and we played Marseille, the games could be really dirty sometimes. I think personally we

have to concentrate to play well. If the players only think about Tottenham, they lose concentration, lose the tactical plan. As I have said, they are intelligent guys, and I'm relying on that intelligence, on the character that is truly revealed

on the field, to bring the team through an important match, but a match worth three points towards our real ambitions, our aim in the league."

Wenger's instruction will centre on his phrase: "The system is the man." Two

hundred years ago, Georges Louis de Buffon, a compatriot, said the style is the man. Wenger has the style and, he hopes, the system.

Shirt row, page 3

Defensive remedy, page 55



Frozen asset: Shearer, Kevin Keegan's returning £15 million striker, takes a tumble during training yesterday

after a fee of £275,000 had been agreed. At the time, Udinese claimed that Blinker had broken his agreement with them, and should be sanctioned. "Apparently a file has been sitting on a desk at Fifa for months, and no action has been taken until now," David Peat, the Wednesday manager, said yesterday. "They have decided that, until they explore the episode properly, Regi will be banned from the game."

A spokesman for Fifa said that the disciplinary committee had been collating evidence, and had now decided to ask Blinker for his comments. "We have asked Mr Blinker to forward an explanation by November 27, and he

will be banned until then," he said. "The ban will remain in place until that time, and perhaps beyond. We want to find out why contracts have apparently been signed with two different clubs."

Graham Mackrell, the Wednesday secretary, said that his club had been punished unfairly. "Udinese are seeking redress with the player, but it is totally unfair on our club, which has done nothing wrong," he said.

Peat said that Wednesday had preempted Udinese's agreement with Blinker by approaching him before he became a free agent. "Regi had agreed to sign for the Italian club if he became a free agent in the summer, but he

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England release Cork from tour of Zimbabwe

By Simon Wilde

ONLY three days before England's cricketers depart on their 14-week winter assignment, Dominic Cork, their strike bowler, withdrew yesterday from the first leg of the tour, to Zimbabwe, for personal reasons. No replacement will be named and it is planned that Cork will join the party in New Zealand early in the new year.

Although the timing of the announcement was hardly ideal for a management team anxious to portray an image of a side single-minded in its intention to improve on a poor playing record in recent years, there was no question of Cork being rebuffed once he had made his request to stay at home. It gained the immediate approval of John Barclay, the tour manager, and Tim Lamb, chief executive of the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB).

In a brief statement issued through the TCCB, Cork alluded only to "some personal matters that need to be resolved", but it has been public knowledge for more than two

Australia recover — page 49
White squares up — page 49

months that he has separated from his wife, Jane, and it is understood that the future of his two-year-old son, Gregory, is now central to his concerns.

Cork's problems highlight the strain placed on the marriages of sportspeople and the contentious decision of the England management to ban wives and girlfriends from joining players on this tour, which straddles Christmas.

Graham Thorpe is delaying his departure by two days to spend time with his wife, Nicki, and their new-born son, Thorpe, who flew home from South Africa last year when his wife underwent an operation to remove an ectopic pregnancy, will reach Harare next Thursday.

Cork's absence will undermine England's hopes of improving on a woeful Test record away from home, for, although Zimbabwe are of modest ability, their benign home pitches mean wickets need to be worked for. Cork's ability and enthusiasm would have stood England in good stead, giving their attack penetration and verve.

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Blinker banned worldwide in contract dispute

By David Maddock

REGI BLINKER, the Sheffield Wednesday winger, has been banned from football worldwide. The decision by Fifa, the world governing body, was taken yesterday as it launched an inquiry into a contract dispute.

Blinker, 31, is alleged, signed a contract with Udinese in January, agreeing to join the Italian club in June, when his contract with Feyenoord expired. The agreement entitled Udinese to sign him on a free transfer, under the Bosman ruling.

On March 5, however, Blinker signed for Wednesday while still under contract with the Dutch club,

after a fee of £275,000 had been agreed. At the time, Udinese claimed that Blinker had broken his agreement with them, and should be sanctioned. "Apparently a file has been sitting on a desk at Fifa for months, and no action has been taken until now," David Peat, the Wednesday manager, said yesterday. "They have decided that, until they explore the episode properly, Regi will be banned from the game."

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سكرا من الال

Kohl links his fate to punctual launch of single currency

FROM ROGER BOYES IN FRANKFURT

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, yesterday launched an unusually passionate appeal for a punctual and strictly applied European monetary union and explicitly linked his political future to the success of the euro.

The strongly voiced intervention by the German leader was made at a European banking congress in Frankfurt attended by finance ministers from Italy, Spain, France and Ireland as well as central bankers. It was regarded as an opening move ahead of the Dublin euro summit which is supposed to set the ground rules for a stability pact, keeping in harness the members of the European monetary union even after the notional start-up date of 1999.

Herr Kohl left none of his 800 listeners in any doubt that he regarded close European integration as his last great political task. "I am linking my political fate with the construction of the European house," he said, his voice thick with emotion. But his speech broke little new ground on the stability pact nor did he address the problems of admitting financially weak states to EMU for political reasons.

The goal must be that many nations meet the stability criteria and participate... from the beginning.

This has been a ritual declaration for two years, designed to show that Germany is not excluding anyone in advance, not striv-

ing for a delay, nor weakening the entry criteria. But the constant repetition of the phrase merely reinforces the popular view that much is being concealed and that true economic debate has been supplanted by theological conviction.

Certainly both Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, the Italian Treasury Minister, and Rodrigo de Rato, the Spanish Economics Minister, by emphasising that their countries were healthy on track for monetary union, seemed to put a great deal of faith in miracles.

The question bothering Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank Governor who was also on the podium, is how far the Chancellor is willing to ignore financial facts and depend on a miracle. The country's six leading economic institutes and the five "wise men" advisers have independently concluded that Bonn will fail to meet two of the Maastricht criteria for a single currency: its public debt will be just over the 60 per cent of gross domestic product required by the treaty, and its deficit will substantially exceed 3 per cent of GDP.

But Herr Kohl and his ministers rumble forward, reciting that EMU will begin in January 1999, and that a significant number of states, including Germany, will be there.

There is an obvious gap between German public opinion — a solid 55-60 per cent against abandoning the mark

for more than two years of opinion sampling — and politicians. That will make it difficult for the Chancellor to reconcile two goals: to select the EMU first wave in March 1998, and to win the German election seven months later.

The divisions are infinitely more complex than that, setting ministers against central bankers, regional politicians against Herr Kohl, and Bonn against other, previously sympathetic EU member states.

Rather than acknowledge these fault lines, the Chancellor has opted to fudge facts. In doing so, he may be undermining his cherished European project. EMU was supposed to render war impossible, sealing for ever the Franco-German friendship. Instead, it seems set to create irritable European neighbours united only by an across-the-fence loathing.

That is what makes yesterday's intervention by Wolfgang Franz so significant. Professor Franz is one of the five wise men who advised the Government, and in an article in *Die Zeit* yesterday, he urged the political class to come clean. There were only two real choices facing Germany, he said: to delay EMU or to exploit the interpretative room in the phrasing of the Maastricht treaty.

Will the Chancellor follow the professor's advice? It seems unlikely.

Leading article, page 25



The pistol-wielding Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina takes over the Spanish Congress in the attempted 1981 coup

Spain's comic opera coup colonel goes home to do some painting

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

THE firebrand colonel from the far Right, whose theatrical coup attempt in 1981 almost snuffed out Spain's young democracy, will be freed from jail tomorrow after serving only half of a 30-year sentence. Antonio Tejero Molina is expected to begin a new career as a painter.

Tejero leapt to international notoriety when an incredulous world saw live television pictures of the attempted coup.

With his tenor voice at a point of near-hysteria and his moustache bristling with indignation, the Civil Guard colonel burst into Congress with 200 soldiers and fired several wild shots in the air with his pistol. "Shut up, everyone!" he screamed, interrupting the confirmation of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo as Prime Minister. "Hit the deck!" The assembled MPs

were sworn at by the soldiers and humiliated.

Behind the comic opera appearance of the act, with his three-cornered patent leather hat looking always as if it would fall off his head, Tejero's coup attempt was an affair of deadly seriousness. With the memory of General Franco still unpleasantly fresh, Spain was on tenterhooks for several hours, fearful for the survival of its four-year-old democracy.

Tanks were reported to be rolling through Valencia and nobody was sure how the armed forces would react.

Only King Juan Carlos's intervention, firmly opposing the coup in a taut television address, caused the colonel's project for "national salvation" to collapse. Wearing military uniform, the King had said: "The Crown, symbol of the permanence and

unity of the homeland, cannot tolerate the attempt of any persons to interrupt by force the democratic process determined by the Constitution and approved by the Spanish people."

Tejero was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for treason. He is unrepentant to this day, saying repeatedly that he "would do the same thing again". He rejects Spain's democratic Constitution because it does not mention the word *Dios* (God), and he is a fierce opponent of regional autonomy.

He earned his remission for "consistent good conduct" in jail. He has donated blood every month for 15 years as his "patriotic duty" and has painted more than 500 landscapes, miniatures and portraits. Sources close to his family say he will set up a commercial studio in Madrid. Four years

ago, an enthusiastic military judge described his work as displaying great artistic originality. It is not certain how civilian critics, more expert in the arts, will judge Tejero's paintings, but his works are expected to be snapped up by admirers on Spain's far Right.

Now 63, Tejero has been in an open prison for three years, enjoying the right to go home to his family every weekend. Throughout his prison sentence, his military jailers have been accused of giving him preferential treatment. He has always had a suite of rooms, a studio and better food than other prisoners, even enjoying an unending supply of his favourite snack, Spanish omelette. Given his prodigious artistic output in prison, access to the best paints, canvases and brushes can hardly have been a problem either.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Warhead material missing

Stockholm: Police at Stockholm's international airport are investigating the disappearance of more than a tonne of a radioactive material used in nuclear warheads.

Interpol and Swedish security police were involved in the search for 2,260lb of beryllium, worth £14 million, that went missing from the freight terminal a year ago.

A tip-off from a lorry driver prompted a search for the material, which was transferred through Arlanda airport after arriving at Stockholm from Tallinn in Estonia by boat. The material should have been prepared in the cargo terminal to be flown to the United States to its buyer in New Jersey, police said. (Reuters)

Teresa rallies

Calcutta: Mother Teresa's doctor said that the 86-year-old nun's condition had improved since she was admitted to hospital on Thursday evening, suffering from heart failure. (Reuters)

Out of hiding

Bonn: Christoph Seidler, 38, a suspected Red Army Faction member on the run for 12 years, surrendered to face charges, which he denies, of involvement in the 1989 murder of a German banker. (AP)

Volcano threat

Port Moresby: Papua New Guinea was preparing to evacuate 8,000 residents from Manam island in the Bismarck Sea, 250 miles north of here, after a volcano off the coast started erupting. (AFP)

Café ban ends

Paris: The Hard Rock Cafe here reopened, two weeks after French authorities closed it after accusing it of importing British beef in defiance of a ban imposed over fears of "mad cow" disease. (Reuters)

Mir the merrier

Moscow: The three-man crew of the Russian Mir space station finally got much-delayed supplies when a cargo craft docked with food, water, fuel and equipment to repair damaged toilets. (Reuters)

Ex-Scientology leader convicted

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE former head of the Church of Scientology in France, Jean-Jacques Mazier, was convicted of second-degree murder and fraud yesterday for his role in the suicide of Patrice Vici, a member of the organisation, in 1988.

A court in Lyons sentenced Mazier to three years' prison, of which 18 months were suspended, and a FR600,000 (£88,000) fine. Thirteen other

members of the church were given suspended sentences varying from eight months to two years for embezzlement, complicity and abuse of confidence. Charges were dropped against ten others, including Danielle Gournard, the organisation's spokesperson, and Jean-Chapelier, formerly head of the Scientologists' internal "police force", both of whom had been charged with being a party to fraud.

The church issued a statement condemning yesterday's judgment as an infringement of religious liberty and a "serious threat to the freedom of conscience for all French citizens".

In heated exchanges during the seven-day trial, the prosecution denounced the "indoctrination" and "mental manipulation" practised by the church, while the defence said that members were victims of "intimidation and incitement".

The church's defence lawyer said he would appeal against the court's decision.

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Le Carré: under fire

Le Carré's tailor fails to cut a dash among Panama elite

FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

A GROUNDWELL of opposition to John Le Carré's new transatlantic bestseller has clouded formerly genteel relations between the British author and the veteran elite of Panama, the Central American republic where his latest tale of intrigue and deception is set. Even before its translation into Spanish, *The Tailor of Panama*, a

story of espionage in the shadow of the famous canal, has brought claims of betrayal from upper crust Panamanians who say Le Carré has painted a malign portrait of their country as a corrupt Casablanca with no heroes.

"I think he came here not to see the real Panama, but the Panama he wanted to portray, whose only face is intrigue and corruption," said Jorge Ritter, former Foreign Minister in the dictatorship of General Manuel

Noriega. Señor Ritter acted as a guide for Le Carré in his research for his previous book, *The Night Manager*. Eduardo Morgan, the Panamanian Ambassador to Washington who invited the author to his beach house, said Le Carré's view of his country was distorted.

"We've got everything God needed to make paradise," said Mickie Abraxas, a well-heeled character, early in the book. "What do we do? Cheat. Conspire. Lie. Pretend. Steal.

Starve each other. We're so stupid and corrupt and blind I don't know why the world does not swallow us up right now."

The Tailor of Panama follows the hapless conversion to spy of Harry Pendel, the presiding maestro at the former Savile Row house of Pendel and Braithwaite Co. tailors to royalty now situated in the financial district of Panama City. Blackmailed by British intelligence to spy for the Crown, Mr Pendel is unable to

provide the information his controllers want and so fabricates plots by his extraordinary array of clients to seize the Panama Canal and overthrow the Government.

Speaking from his home in London last night, Le Carré described the reaction as high comedy. "I was dealing with the West, with Britain, the concept of truth and the story of this tragic tailor. Conceivably people in Panama who received me mistook good manners for good intent."

THE TAILOR OF PANAMA

The book: "distorted"

US threatens to bar France from Nato over command row

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

THE United States made clear for the first time yesterday that it is ready to put off France's re-entry to full Nato membership rather than give in to French demands for the European command of the alliance in southern Europe.

US military officials laid down their country's hard line as the dispute prevented top military chiefs of the alliance from agreeing on a plan for revamping the command.

Nato's move to "Europeanise" itself has been delayed in recent weeks over France's insistence on taking the US-held Southern Command, based in Naples, and giving it to a European officer. France has made clear it wants the post for a French officer and President Clinton has told French Prime Minister Jospin the issue is not a negotiating tactic but essential to France rejoining the full integrated military structure it left three decades ago.

America refuses to relinquish the key AFSOUTH command because it includes control of the Sixth Fleet and the

Mediterranean. While both sides have talked of a compromise, positions have hardened, casting a shadow on the alliance's project for reforming itself to include a more separate European "defence identity".

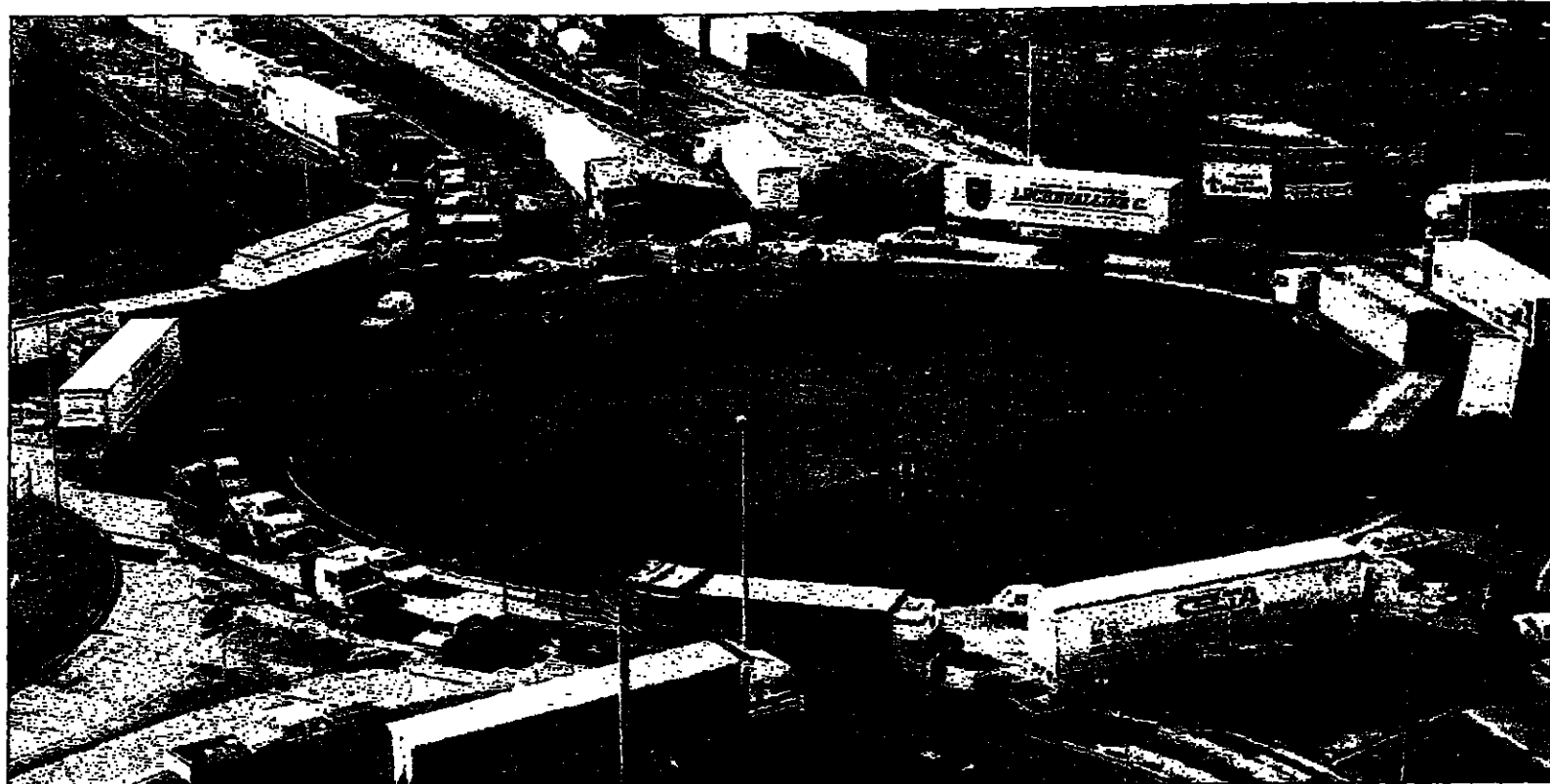
Asked if Washington was prepared to keep France out of Nato, an authoritative US officer said: "If the French and we cannot find a way around it, then we are prepared to say we will just have to wait for a different day." Officers insisted any US concession would spark such anger in Congress that it would unquestionably "mark the end of the alliance".

With the dispute holding up Nato's business in such matters as its inclusion of former Communist nations, defence ministers are under pressure to find a solution at a Brussels session next month. However, senior diplomats said only a deal between the heads of state seemed likely to resolve the dispute before a summit of Nato's 16 leaders, scheduled for early next summer.

The military chiefs yesterday agreed on slimming down Nato's multiple local headquarters by about two thirds, but gave up the attempt at a consensus on cutting the European regional commands from three to two. The existing aim is to remove the British-based command, leaving only one in European hands, while America holds the Southern Command as well as the supreme command and responsibility for the Atlantic area.

General Klaus Naumann of Germany, chairman of Nato's military committee, said a big majority of countries wanted just two European commands — one in The Netherlands commanding the north, the other in Italy commanding the south and the Mediterranean. The Americans, however, were keen to keep open the option of retaining the third command, based in Britain, as a possible solution to the French quarrel.

French officials, however, said Paris wanted "Naples or nothing".



Lorry drivers block access to main roads outside Caen yesterday, the fifth day of their strike, after union talks with haulage firms broke down

Paris threatened as lorry drivers' strike worsens

BY SUSAN BELL
IN PARIS
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

FRENCH lorry drivers increased their pressure on the Government yesterday after union talks with haulage bosses broke down. They

mounted their fifth day of roadblocks and sealed off access to more petrol stations and depots across the country.

In a move that could cause chaos in the capital, union leaders threatened to bring their protest to the Paris region at the weekend if their

demands were not met soon. More than 50,000 drivers are taking part in the campaign for better pay, a shorter working week and early retirement.

Shortly before talks were to have been renewed last night, the haulage firms said they had agreed to drivers' de-

mands for payment for all the hours spent away from home rather than just the hours spent on the road. Nevertheless, by yesterday evening several dozen lorries were blocking the entrance to the huge food market at Rungis on the outskirts of Paris.

More than 1,000 British lorry drivers were facing another night sleeping in their cabs in France as the blockade continued. British freight operators said the dispute was ruining them and that British drivers were fast running out of food and money.

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Important information on the Society's conversion proposals, including the criteria for entitlement to vote, is contained in the leaflet "Proposal to convert to plc status - Your questions answered", which was sent in April to all members who, at that time, were shown on our records as sole or first named account holders.

We will be writing to all sole or first named investing members in December.



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Arafat sets two-year deadline for proclaiming Palestinian state

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

YASSIR ARAFAT yesterday planted a political time-bomb under the deadlocked peace negotiations with Israel by announcing that he would unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state in two years.

The surprise declaration prompted a furious reaction from Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, who hinted that Israel was prepared to use maximum force to counter any such move in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr Netanyahu warned the Palestinians that they risked committing a "grave mistake" if they went ahead with the UDI threat, which would be a

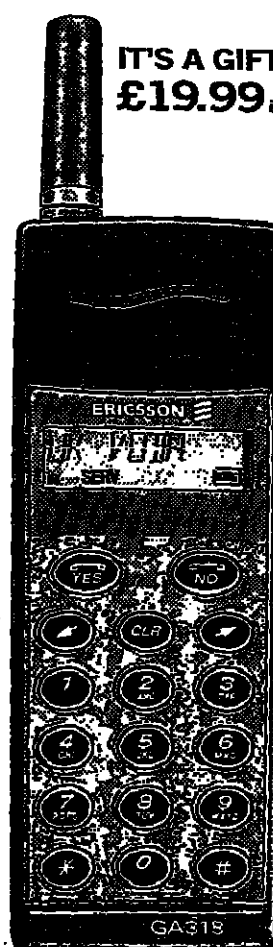
violation of the autonomy accord signed in 1993, the basis of peace moves made since. Mr Netanyahu added that the Jewish state was already "ready to deal with any such possibility".

Earlier Mr Netanyahu, an outspoken opponent of any fully fledged Palestinian state, told the Hebrew daily *Haaretz* that he feared that, if his Government were to accept any such declaration of UDI by the Palestinians, a similar move could be made by the Israeli Arab citizens of Israel, who number about 800,000. Palestinian sources said that it was no coincidence that Mr Arafat chose to make his explosive declaration in an

interview with a French Radio station, Europe-1, as the Palestinian leader was expected to get French and other European support. Asked when a Palestinian state would exist, Mr Arafat replied: "As soon as the interim period is over, we shall declare our Palestinian state — in two years' time."

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Widow incites Mafia revolt

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

THE widow of a Mafia gangster has turned to God and is appealing to other Mafia women to join her in rebelling against Cosa Nostra and "chase out the Devil".

Filippa Inzerillo — known as Donna Filippa — has been a recluse since the murder in 1981 of her husband Totuccio, a notorious Mafia boss. He was killed together with 20 other family members, including his 16-year-old son, during the 1980 Mafia wars with the dominant Corleone clan led by Salvatore "Totò" Riina, the "boss of bosses", who is serving nine life sentences and faces further charges.

But after a "mystical experience", Donna Filippa has turned what was once a Mafia fortress, a three-storey villa at Passo di Rigano on the outskirts of Palermo, into an open "house of prayer" dominated by images of Christ. She has donated adjoining land to the local parish to build a church.

The police have persuaded about 1,000 male mafiosi to become informers, but almost all Mafia women have remained loyal to the Cosa Nostra, despite high family death tolls.

Announcing her conversion this week, Donna Filippa said: "It is not easy to heal the wounds which have lacerated my heart... but I heard a small voice inside me, and God called me".

She urged other Mafia women to "educate your children in love, break your chains, go back to life and not death".

Donna Filippa said she had forgiven Riina. "His spirit is sick", she said. "He should repeat not only before the magistrates but also before the Lord".

Zaire aid workers tell of 'thousands on brink of death'

BY SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

WESTERN pressure to send a military intervention force to eastern Zaire mounted yesterday, with claims from the leading US refugee agency that "tens of thousands of refugees were on the brink of death" in camps near Bukavu.

Lionel Rosenblatt, president of Refugees International, said in Bukavu there were reports that many refugees had died in makeshift camps, set up when they were driven out of more permanent bases in South Kivu during fighting between their own Rwandan Hutu militiamen and east Zaire's rebels. "They are increasingly desperate. We have reports of deaths among different groups and we expect the mortality rate to increase," said Mr Rosenblatt.

When Mugunga camp was cleared by rebels ten days ago, 500,000 Hutus returned home, mostly in good health. But refugees in South Kivu are likely to be in a much worse condition because they fled their camps around Bukavu and Uvira nearly a month ago. Their leaders will have stockpiled food but this will have been to feed the *Interahamwe* (those who kill together), the extremist Hutu militia behind the 1994 genocide of Tutsis and Hutu moderates in Rwanda.

Mr Rosenblatt said in Bukavu: "We can deduce that probably thousands are very

near death now. If aid does not come in quickly, and at risk are tens or even hundreds of thousands."

The number of refugees in South Kivu is unknown. But this has not prevented wild speculation from a number of aid groups about how many are at risk. More accurate numbers may soon be revealed by American satellite images of the region. In the meantime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said in Geneva that "300,000 are missing in South Kivu".

Combined with the 500,000 who have returned to Rwanda, this would bring the total to 200,000 — more than were thought to be in the camps before they were cleared. Ethio-

West wrestles with logistics

A meeting in Stuttgart of Western nations planning intervention in Zaire might last all the weekend after it was locked last night in lengthy discussions on options and logistics (Michael Binyon writes). Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril of Canada, which is co-ordinating the proposed force, said planners expected to have a full range of options by tomorrow night.

opia, which is expected to provide the bulk of troops to be deployed in eastern Zaire, announced yesterday that it would not participate in a multinational force if its mandate did not include orders to disarm the *Interahamwe* and separate them from the civilians they have hidden among for two years. France, America and Zaire have rejected such plans as too risky.

Mr Rosenblatt confirmed yesterday that the *Interahamwe* are still in control of many refugees. Many observers believe that, without a mandate to take on the Hutu militia, it may prove impossible to open humanitarian corridors for innocent civilians to return home to Rwanda, as the *Interahamwe* have informers and orders to kill anyone wanting to go home.

Eastern Zaire's rebels clashed with Hutu militia on the western edge of Lake Kivu yesterday and drove stranded refugees on trucks back to Goma, on the northern shore, where they were transferred to Rwanda. This move further undermined the case for a multinational force in eastern Zaire, which both the rebels and many aid agencies fear would freeze the refugees where they are in new camps rather than offer them a chance to go home.

Heart of darkness, page 24



A woman takes her child to a Bangalore protest against the Miss World contest

Beauty pageant highlights poverty

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS
IN BANGALORE

THE Miss World beauty pageant in Bangalore, to be watched on television today by more than two billion people in 115 countries, puts the new India on show: liberal, expensive, Westernised and full of imported goods.

The protests by traditionalist Hindus against the pageant are a whimper against the roar of change, the speed of which is creating chaos in the once-timeless villages and unsettling the urban poor, who are exposed to unimagined glamour on newly arrived foreign television programmes.

This has happened in less than five years. Economic reforms since 1991 have increased the divide between rich and poor in the more prosperous states, split roughly along high-caste and low-caste lines. The steady breakdown of caste barriers in northern India — they have long since been eroded in the South — is putting unprecedented strains on a country that traditionally has resisted change.

Bangalore, India's high-tech boomtown, is choking on its own success. Television will show only the glamorous images today: the world will not see the pollution, the beggars, the slums or the crumbling roads. Nor will people be told of the hours of daily power cuts or the shortages of piped water, the scourges of a country that is outgrowing itself.

Dozens held: The police rounded up dozens of suspected troublemakers who might try to disrupt the pageant, and put others under surveillance. Nearly 10,000 police officers have been deployed and schools and colleges were ordered closed yesterday and today as a precaution.

The Supreme Court, meanwhile, ruled yesterday that the organisers of the pageant could serve alcoholic drinks at the event. (A.P. Reuter)

Leading article, page 25

EU to renew Nigeria sanctions after deadlock on rights

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AFTER the failure of the Commonwealth mission to Nigeria to obtain any concessions on human rights and democracy, the European Union is to renew sanctions against the oil-rich country for a further six months.

On Monday, EU foreign ministers will approve a recommendation to continue restrictions on travel by

Nigerian officials as well as an arms embargo and other sanctions imposed in response to the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists last year. "The general human rights situation and the pace and the manner of the transition to civil democratic rule continue to give rise to serious concern," the EU said on Thursday.

The Europeans said "modest steps" in the right direction had not

been enough to lift sanctions. Their move comes after the first mission by a Commonwealth task force to Nigeria failed to obtain reassurances that the military Government of General Sani Abacha would speed its timetable for a return to democracy.

Seven Commonwealth ministers, headed by Stan Mudenge, the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe, spent two days in Lagos but did not meet General Abacha and were rebuffed

by Tom Ikimi, Nigeria's Foreign Minister. Diplomats said the Nigerians, who insist that the suspension of Commonwealth membership be ended before they enter serious discussions with the action group, adopted a tough line and indicated there would be no change in the programme laid down for a handover to an elected President in 1998.

The Commonwealth group, however, is split between those who want

to take a tough line, such as Britain and Canada, and African members who are unwilling to step up Commonwealth sanctions. The Nigerians insisted at the Abuja talks that the transition programme to democracy was on course, and leaders of registered political parties, as well as traditional rulers, expressed support for General Abacha.

S Stena Line

Stena Line has added extra sailings to its Dover-Calais route to meet increased demand. The company is now operating a shuttle service of 27 return sailings a day to Calais with a fleet of four ferries and a fast catamaran.

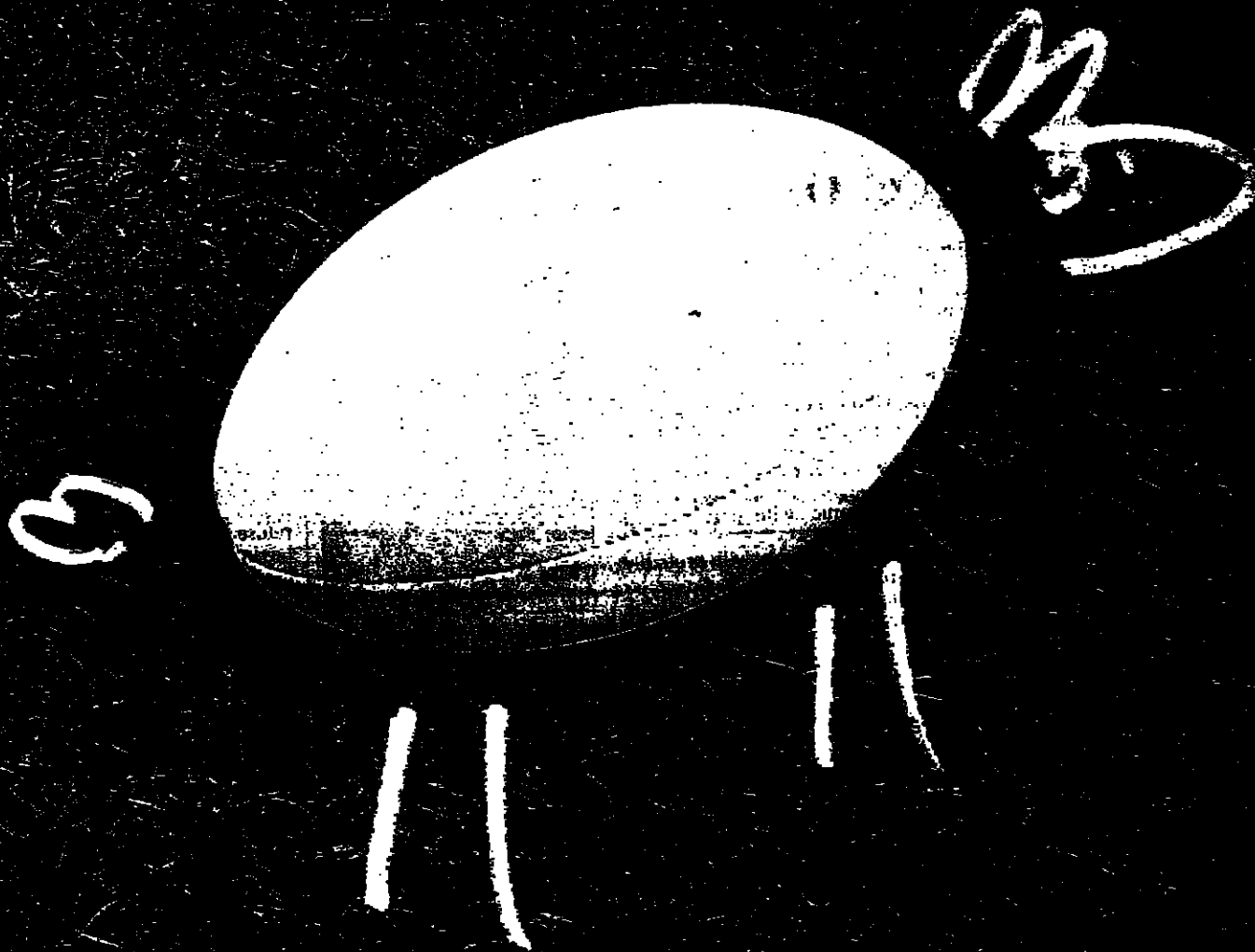
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Dole's successor flexes muscles for tussle with Clinton

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THEY now call him the most influential Republican in Washington. Trent Lott, Bob Dole's successor as Senate Majority Leader, is the new gatekeeper of Congress with power that some Republicans argue outstrips that of the President himself. As Mr Clinton wrestles to put together a Cabinet, a budget and a slate of policies for his second term, he knows Mr Lott can probably block any move the Republicans do not endorse.

Since June, when Mr Dole stepped down from the Senate to mount his bid for the presidency, the conservative 55-year-old from Mississippi has been settling into his predecessor's elegant Capitol Hill office overlooking the Mall. Yet, despite a quarter of a century in Congress, he has shunned the limelight so much even his closest congressional allies are unsure how he will wield his power.

He presides over the largest Republican Senate majority since the 1920s and, on some counts, the most conservative Senate since then. The elections three weeks ago narrowed the Republican majority in the House of Representatives and softened its radical-right edge, but increased the Senate majority by two seats to 55-45. For two years the Senate has acted as a moderate brake on the House; it may now be equally

hardline. Mr Lott's influence is also boosted by the more subdued role imposed on Newt Gingrich, the unpopular House Speaker, who is now the subject of an ethics investigation.

During Mr Lott's 16 years in the House and eight in the Senate, he showed a Gingrich-like dislike of high taxes and big government. But, unlike Mr Gingrich, he is known for his skill in brokering deals with both sides, turning on his southern charm when he wants. "He can jab in that stiletto and cut your heart out before you know what's happening, because he's smiling all the while", one Democrat Senate aide told *The Baltimore Sun*. Since June, Republicans and Democrats have

been struck by his pragmatism in helping to break the legislative logjam on welfare and the 1997 budget.

However, since Mr Clinton's re-election, Mr Lott has been in uncompromising mood, furious that Democrats appropriated the best Republican themes while portraying their rivals as extremists. On Medicare, the US healthcare system near collapse, Democrats "misrepresented us, lied and demagogued", he argues.

He has told close aides he plans to imitate the way George Mitchell, as Democratic Senate Majority Leader, ruined George Bush's presidency by waiting for Mr Bush to put forward proposals and then manipulating Congress to block them. He wants to force Mr Clinton to acknowledge publicly that Medicare will be bankrupt without hugely unpopular cuts — and then to suggest those cuts. Mr Lott has rejected Mr Clinton's attempt to pass the issue to a bipartisan commission.

One of the few prominent politicians untainted by ethical shadows, he also intends to hold Mr Clinton's toes in the fire over fund-raising.

Perhaps wisely, he denies presidential ambitions. The wheeler-dealer of a Senate power-broker is often not a good platform for a national campaign, as Mr Dole discovered.



Lott: outward southern charm hides a stiletto



Brian Peterson, flanked by his parents Barbara and Brian, on his way to surrendering to charges of murdering his girlfriend's baby

Prosecutors seek death for teenage lovers

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

SOBBING hysterically, a Delaware mother surrendered her only son to law enforcement officers knowing that they want to put him to death.

Barbara Peterson clung desperately to Brian, 18, as they approached the FBI office in the city of Wilmington. The teenager and Amy Grossberg, his school girlfriend, are together charged with the murder of their newborn son. They allegedly dumped the baby's body in a rubbish skip after Miss Grossberg gave birth in a motel room. Prosecutors have said they intend to seek the death penalty.

The case became an instant *cause célèbre*. Both suspects are from rich families. When the Peterson family approached the FBI office, they were surrounded by cameras, reporters and spectators who shouted abuse. The

baby died from head trauma and excessive shaking, and investigators believe his killing was premeditated. But supporters of the teenage couple say that they were frightened about how their parents would react and were psychologically disturbed when they delivered the baby without medical assistance.

Class consciousness, that most un-American of failings, has been evident. Would the case have created such nationwide debate if the two families had been humdrum, rather than millionaires with large homes and big futures? Observers have criticised Donald Roberts, the state assistant attorney-general, for seeking to make political gain out of the demand for capital punishment. His desire for the death penalty was

announced even before Brian Peterson turned himself in, and the American Civil Liberties Union suggested he was "caught up in the public relations of all this".

Even hardliners are having a difficult time seeing the duo as toughened criminals. Commentators have also asked if America, with its lurid debates about late-term abortions but its ambivalence to schoolyard sex, has sent confusing signals to young people about the responsibilities of bringing children into the world.

Brian Peterson, a college freshman, was a cliché of the all-American boy. He was good at sports, studied hard, and had been a child model — tanned face, straight teeth, blond hair.

Shy and freckled, Amy was reared in a mock-Tudor mansion, worked in

the holidays as a day-camp counsellor for younger children, and had the makings of a fine teacher. The couple started dating when they were 14, and everyone seemed to approve.

Miss Grossberg, who was arrested soon after the discovery of her baby's body, was treated in hospital for post-natal complications while her boyfriend was still at large. A police hunt was mounted for him, and his photograph was broadcast nationwide. Brian Peterson finally turned himself in after anguished discussions with his parents.

The Civil Liberties Union said that it was "inconceivable" that the youngsters could be executed, but as Brian Peterson took his last free steps to the FBI office, onlookers shouted: "Baby killer! May you fry!"

'Bl Bob' says he was cheated of Congress seat

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IN KEEPING with his fiery reputation, Bob Dornan refused to go either quietly or gracefully yesterday.

Rather, the ultraconservative Republican fumed that he had been cheated out of his seat after 18 years in Congress by a Mexican-American businessman he denounced as a liar. Loretta Sanchez, who has never held office, appeared to have captured the Democrats' biggest scalp of the American elections. With

only 1,300 late ballots still to be counted, she held a narrow but seemingly insurmountable lead over Mr Dornan in Orange County, once an impregnable Republican stronghold south of Los Angeles.

Congress will be a less confrontational place without Mr Dornan. Last year he lost his speaking privileges in the House of Representatives for a day after refusing to withdraw an accusation from the floor that President Clinton gave "aid and comfort to the enemy" by taking part in a rally against the Vietnam war while

at Oxford. Outside the House, Mr Dornan routinely disparaged Mr Clinton as a "womaniser", an "adulterer" and "disgraced draft-dodger" who demeaned the office of President with his "silk girlie-girlie jogging shorts". Mr Clinton once remarked: "Every time I see Bob Dornan, he looks like he needs a rabies shot."

After Mr Dornan grabbed a fellow congressman by the collar and accused him of being a "draft-dodging wingnut", he explained somewhat lamely that he had only been straighten-

ing his colleague's tie. Mr Dornan, 63, a former fighter pilot, is known as "Bl Bob" for his ardent support of the B1 bomber and other costly Pentagon projects, as well as his blitzkrieg rhetoric. Shifting ethnic lines caught up with him. Newcomers have been streaming into Orange County, the home of Disneyland, and half the population is now Hispanic, with only a third white.

Mr Dornan will probably resume his former career on talk radio, but he said he might run again in 1998.



Dornan: fiery reputation

Navy officer 'will fast to death' in protest at discharge for bullying

New York: A Canadian naval officer is in the fourth week of a hunger strike in protest at being court-martialled for abusing his crew (Quentin Letts writes).

Lieutenant Dean Marsaw, 40, formerly a star of the Canadian Navy, is in declining health as he continues to refuse food. He weighs 9st 9lb, having lost 40lb. Marsaw was found guilty last year of bullying his crew and disgraceful behaviour at a Christmas party, where he inserted a

cigar tube in the rectum of a Royal Navy officer who had passed out drunk.

More than 30 witnesses gave evidence against Marsaw at the tribunal, which recommended his discharge after 17 years' service. He was demoted from lieutenant-commander. For the past four weeks, he has taken only fluids in his second hunger strike in a year. "This is my commitment to the honour and integrity of the service, which I believe is being violat-

ed on a far-too-frequent basis," Marsaw said at his home in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. He said he would settle for death rather than surrender his demand for an independent inquiry of his case.

Marsaw's supporters say that his men simply did not like the discipline he imposed and that he was convicted on the flimsiest of evidence. Marsaw demanded the highest standards, brooked no nonsense, and made plenty of enemies.

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Clintons take natural break in Australia's far frontier

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN PORT DOUGLAS

THERE are few places more suited to a landmark environmental speech than Port Douglas in far north Queensland, where President Clinton yesterday warned the world of devastating consequences if pollution and climate change continue.

Surrounded by nearly two million acres of rainforest and with the Great Barrier Reef offshore, north Queensland is one of the most sensitive environments in the world. It is also one of the most blissfully undemanding, where the locals are not so much laid back as horizontal.

How much this is due to the searing temperatures or the intake of residents, who appear to live on an endless supply of ice-cold amber fluid, remains uncertain.

Either way, the ambience of this tropical paradise had clearly worked its spell on the American President. When he and Mrs Clinton alighted from their helicopter at the local sports ground early yesterday, the whole town had turned out to greet them.

Much to everyone's surprise, Mr Clinton decided to thank each and every one of them personally for their welcome. Even *The Times's* correspondent was given a presidential handshake as Mr Clinton spent 20 minutes

slowly walking down a line of about 300 people who had been waiting for his arrival. In terms of VIP visits, Port Douglas had not seen anything like it since Captain Cook drifted along these shores more than 200 years ago.

Apart from a tarred road and hotel accommodation, not much has changed in these parts over the past two centuries, and that is its appeal.

Local tourism promoters could not believe their good fortune when they heard of President Clinton's holiday plans.

Although a moderately popular international destination, Port Douglas still has to struggle with the tyranny of its own remoteness, even from Australia's main cities.

Those who do make the effort discover a region which boasts not one but two World Heritage listed sites, the Daintree rainforest in the north and the Great Barrier Reef in the east.

An estimated 1,500 species of fish live on the reef, which stretches for more than 1,200 miles along the Queensland coast. The rainforest, with 500 varieties of plant and 25 endangered animal species, also offers a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

Mr Clinton and his wife Hillary visited a wildlife park



President Clinton and his wife Hillary cradle a koala, named Chelsea after their daughter, on a visit to the Daintree rainforest yesterday

in the rainforest where the President cradled Chelsea, a nine-month-old koala named after their daughter.

"Most people only see pictures of koalas ... I had no idea they were so soft," he said.

Asked by one reporter what she thought of having a "critter" named after her 16-year-old daughter, Mrs Clinton smiled. "We called her [Chel-

sea] this morning and told her we were going to see her namesake," Mr Clinton said.

As the Clintons strolled through the park, a ranger answered their questions about Australia's marsupials, at one stage telling the President that large red kangaroos would tower over him.

While both Clintons patted the friendly kangaroos, only the President hand-fed the

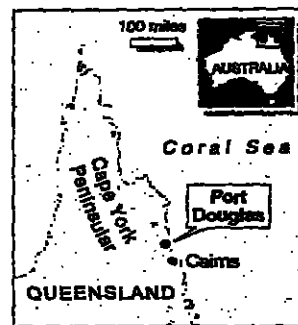
animals compressed grain pellets from a paper bag. At Port Douglas's main pub, the Courthouse Hotel, where only real men dare to drink, the tropical wonders on the doorstep rarely excite the regulars.

When Mr Clinton drove by, most of those at the public bar raised their glasses. "Come in for a beer," shouted one.

But the world's most powerful man had a date with a

snorkel. The Clintons spent about an hour snorkelling at the reef, an experience that the President described as "unforgettable".

The Clintons, accompanied by what a spokeswoman would only describe as "a lot" of Secret Service agents, went to a site about 30 miles off the coast and swam above the coral and brightly coloured fish.



Tasmania mass killer smirks as he is jailed for life

By ROGER MAYNARD

THERE were calls yesterday for the restoration of the death penalty as the curtain fell on one of the darkest episodes in Australian criminal history. Martin Bryant, the mass murderer, was sentenced to life imprisonment with no prospect of parole.

Almost seven months after he ran amok with a semi-automatic rifle at Port Arthur in Tasmania, the 29-year-old killer, described by the judge as a pathetic social misfit, smirked as he stood in the dock at Hobart Supreme Court.

Relations of the 35 victims looked on in shock and anger as Bryant, who pleaded guilty to 72 charges, appeared unaffected by the sentence.

Carolyn Loughnan, whose daughter, Sarah, 15, was shot dead by Bryant, demanded a national debate on capital punishment.

"They can look at making it retrospective to 28 April 1996 because our lives have been destroyed. That man has had seven months more life than my daughter and the other 34 victims had," she said.

Another survivor, Pamela Sloan, also supported the death penalty for Bryant.

Judge William Cox, Tasmania's Chief Justice, said it was difficult to imagine a more chilling catalogue of crime. "His selection of victims was indiscriminate ... he killed individual family members, married couples and, in one case, all the members of one family save the bereaved father left in mourning," he said.

But he added that because Bryant was so grossly disturbed, he also deserved a degree of "understanding and pity".

He said: "I have no reason to hope and every reason to fear that he will remain indefinitely as disturbed and insensitive as he was when planning and executing the crimes of which he now stands convicted."

President proposes pact on pollution

Port Douglas: President Clinton yesterday called for a global agreement aimed at ridding the earth of environmental pollution (Roger Maynard writes).

In a landmark speech delivered against the backdrop of Australia's Great Barrier Reef — one of the world's most sensitive marine environments — the US leader called on the community of nations to agree to a legally binding commitment to fight climate change.

And he gave a warning that if the world did not take heed, the consequences could be disastrous. The call was deeply embarrassing for the Australian Government, which has fought against the introduction of such an agreement.

Mr Clinton told several hundred in this north Queensland resort that pollution of the environment not only affected health and quality of life, but also posed a serious threat to peace. If

the world let it continue unabated, "the consequences will be nothing less than devastating for the children here and their children", he said.

The President said that new weather patterns would spread infectious diseases, damage economies and raise sea levels. He was speaking at the climax of a four-day working holiday before next week's Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum summit in Manila.

US and China near 'partnership'

Manila: When President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin of China meet here tomorrow, it will be a long way from Mr Clinton's nomination speech four years ago when he spoke of "the butchers of Peking" (Jonathan Mirsky writes).

Mr Jiang will have every right to feel that, although the issues that divide the two countries remain, America

has abandoned its threats of sanctions in favour of what Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, nearly called a "partnership" two days ago.

The meeting between Mr Clinton and Mr Jiang will take place during the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum summit here. Mr Christopher has been seeking to ensure that tomorrow's

meeting goes so well that the two leaders will announce an exchange of presidential visits in the new year.

After three years of trying to hammer Peking with threats unless China improved its human rights record and stopped pirating American copyrights, Mr Clinton went over to a policy of "constructive engagement".

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Russians make a song and dance about silver wedding of their favourite singer

Capitalist crooner's star turn

TO STUNNED passers-by the scene looked like the opening shot of a new film by Francis Ford Coppola, award-winning director of *The Godfather*. Hundreds of Russian celebrities, political heavyweights and millionaires stood in line to pay their respects to one of the country's most loved and controversial entertainers at a ballroom in a central Moscow hotel.

As their valuable gifts were whisked away by security men for safekeeping, the head of Moscow State Circus upstaged other guests by arriving with a present of a horse that walked nervously on to the dance floor to the crowd's delight.

Iosif Kobzon, 59, often compared to Frank Sinatra as much for his crooner's

MOSCOW FILE
by RICHARD BEESTON



Moscow's leading entrepreneurs with interests from sportswear outlets to hotels. Last year, however, his small empire looked vulnerable after his controversial underworld ties threatened his reputation and ability to operate. The scandal erupted when the US Embassy in Moscow turned down his visa application after the FBI cited his close links with Vyacheslav (Yaponchik) Ivankov, the godfather of Russian organised crime in America on racketeering charges.

Mr Kobzon has consistently denied the allegations, although he did confirm he had perfectly innocent contacts with Mr Ivankov before the latter's arrest.

Whatever the truth, the former stage star may yet be poised for his greatest role. Certainly the famous have not shunned him. At his lavish party earlier this month, the guest list included Yuri Luzhkov, the powerful Mayor of Moscow, General Aleksandr Rutskoi, the former Vice-President, and celebrities such as Ilya Glazunov, the artist.

This week he announced he had been appointed "cultural adviser" to Mr Luzhkov, regarded by many as a strong contender for the Kremlin leadership. Russians do not seem dismayed by the American criticism, which may have boosted his reputation back home.



Iosif Kobzon, whose singing voice has been compared to Frank Sinatra's

American may have betrayed spy for Britain

DURING the Cold War, the CIA liked to blame its British counterpart for the string of dramatic intelligence setbacks caused by Soviet double agents in MI6. Now the roles are being reversed.

This week's arrest of the CIA's Harold Nicholson has added to suspicions that he betrayed a British spy seized earlier this year in Moscow. Platon Obukhov, a middle-ranking Russian diplomat, was recruited by British intelligence in Norway in the early 1990s. He worked at the North American department of the Russian Foreign Ministry and much of the material he relayed would have been seen by the Americans.

He was under surveillance by Russian counter-intelligence for weeks before his arrest in April. The row led to the ill-fated expulsion of four British and Russian diplomats, although no satisfactory explanation was given as to how he was exposed. Now British intelligence will want to know exactly what information was passed on.

In 1994, Aldrich Ames, another CIA agent working for the Russians, was arrested in Washington. His treachery led to the death of ten Western agents, and exposed British intelligence's highest-placed spy in Moscow, Oleg Gordievsky.

Bureaucrats face taxing time

RUSSIA'S top bureaucrats, accustomed to chauffeur-driven cars and state dachas among the perks of office, are on the receiving end of a Kremlin crackdown for the first time in years.

In a desperate effort to raise taxes, the authorities have turned on their own ranks. President Yeltsin has ordered that every public employee should de-

clare his full earnings to the Temporary Emergency Commission, whose initials in Russian are the same as the Soviet Union's secret police.

The first victim was Vadim Kisin, a deputy minister responsible for ties with CIS nations, who was sacked this week for not paying his taxes. Other heads are expected to roll.

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Russia wins compromise on Belarus referendum

By RICHARD BEESTON

RUSSIA secured a stunning last-minute compromise, yesterday between the Belarus parliament and President Lukashenko, which denied the autocratic leader's tough image but left him well placed to augment his powers in the new year.

A Russian mediation team led by Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, secured a deal which defused the power struggle between the legislature and the executive. Under the compromise, the parliament agreed to withdraw an impeachment petition against the President while in return Mr Lukashenko accepted that his planned referendum to-

morrow should not be binding. The referendum, which is expected to be passed easily, called for the President's term to be extended and his powers increased.

"This is a very important step. In simple terms, it marks an end to the confrontation that the Belarus people have been waiting for," an exhausted Mr Chernomyrdin said.

There was much speculation in Minsk over how the Russian Prime Minister had persuaded President Lukashenko to back down on the referendum after days of defiant speeches by the Belarus leader who had vowed never to compromise. Some people

suspected that Mr Chernomyrdin may have resorted to threatening Mr Lukashenko with an economic squeeze on Belarus, which relies completely on Russia for its supplies of gas, oil and electricity.

"The negotiations were very difficult," Mr Chernomyrdin said. "I have not been involved in such an undertaking for 15 years." Nevertheless, the deal leaves Mr Lukashenko well placed eventually to have his way. He remains popular outside Minsk and after the referendum he will head a committee which must agree on a final draft of a new constitution within three months.

Republic where bloodshed and misery ruled

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BEARUS has changed its boundaries at least three times this century. Indeed, throughout history, this flat, featureless land between Poland and Russia has been invaded, conquered and ruled in turn by all the present neighbours of Belarus.

When the country reluctantly declared independence on the breakup of the Soviet Union, it had little history and no national tradition on which to base the new state.

Of all the former Soviet republics, Belarus was the most Russified: Belarussian is little more than a dialect of Russian, and in most main cities, especially the capital, Minsk, Russian has become the standard language.

Belarus also has the blood-

iest history in the region. It was the main area where Russian Jews were confined in what was called the "pale of settlement" during Tsarist times, and saw some of the worst pogroms during the government-inspired anti-Semitic riots of the 1890s, when thousands of Jews emigrated.

Many fled to America and Britain and Jewish shops and establishments bearing the

name Minsky became common in New York. Nevertheless, before the Second World War almost 40 per cent of the population of Minsk was Jewish. Most were murdered during the three-year occupation of the capital by the Germans.

The Second World War took a heavy toll. Belarus lost a quarter of its population, a higher percentage than any other republic. More than 100

villages were burnt to the ground. During the onslaught in 1941 and the Soviet counter-attack in 1944, Minsk was almost completely destroyed: when it was rebuilt by Stalin it was an archetypal Soviet city, with monumental neo-classical buildings in the centre.

A second devastating blow struck Belorussia, as the republic was then called, in 1986, when the Chernobyl nuclear

reactor exploded. The wind blew the radioactive fallout north, and Belorussia was heavily contaminated. Huge tracts of land were poisoned; thousands received dangerous doses of radiation; agriculture was devastated.

In the past decade, hundreds of people, including children, have developed cancers. The disaster has cost the struggling economy millions of pounds.

Minsk was poised for a moment of glory immediately after the break-up of the Soviet Union when it was selected as the headquarters of the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, the CIS has never got off the ground, no proper secretariat was developed, and although several meetings have been held in Minsk, the city plays no role in the post-Soviet community.



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■ VISUAL ART

Catching up with Hockney: Manchester's retrospective is a triumph of sensuality



■ OPERA 1

On the London fringe a work by the late Stephen Oliver is given a lively staging

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ OPERA 2

... with the New York Met. Plastic Domingo sings to defy age in new *Carmina*

OPERA IN LONDON AND NEW YORK

Merry miniatures

THE title of Jigsaw Music Theatre's new triple bill, *Perfectly Poisonous*, may sound like a quote about it from the press, but even though none of the three works is exactly a masterpiece, they are imaginatively done and provide an entertaining evening. Stephen Oliver's *The Waiter's Revenge* and Seymour Barab's *Pizza (con funghi)*, turn on plots involving murder by poison, and Barab's *A Hand of Bridge* is included because it makes a good curtain-raiser.

The Barber lasts all of an un-Wagnerian nine minutes but it says more than many longer operas. Two couples are playing bridge, and during the game each individual's private thoughts are revealed to amusing effect. Sarah L. Jennings's effective staging puts the characters in masks, but Moira Harris's Geraldine stood out for her shining soprano and relish of words. Barber's lyrical, jazz-inflected score was affectionately played by a chamber orchestra under Bruce O'Neil.

Oliver's piece says rather less, and not simply because it is a wordless opera. The comic possibilities of its restaurant setting and characterisation

Jigsaw
Music Theatre
The Place.

being built entirely on vocal sounds are never quite fulfilled. Daniel Norman was the bullying manager, and Michael Harper disclosed a remarkably smooth counter-tenor. Five more singers were good as the guests.

Pizza (con funghi) is an amiable operatic parody. The 18th-century setting, evoked by Marsha Roddy in lush designs, is enlivened by anachronistic touches, like the cuckolded Count Formaggio's almost fatal passion for mushroom pizza. The baritone Tom McVeigh was strong in the part, and Daniel Norman took the tenor role of the wimpish lover. But the soprano Jenny Saunders and mezzo Helen Greenaway stood out as Voluptua and her indiscreet maid with voices well-suited to more serious works. Jigsaw's triple bill alternates with its Kurt Weill revue at The Place Theatre until Wednesday.

JOHN ALLISON

The Barnum of Seville

IN RECENT years, the Metropolitan Opera has had scarcely more success with *Carmen* than the feckless Don José. Peter Hall's production was a dreary bore. Since then, several production teams have been engaged by the company and then sent packing for one reason or another.

Finally, the Met turned to Franco Zeffirelli, who has an instinctive understanding of what works in this gargantuan auditorium. His staging is a predictably lavish affair which gives the Met what it needed: a visually compelling, well-conceived vision.

The centrepiece is a gorgeous curtain of knotted rags which is draped across the stage like the fringe of a gypsy's scarf. By Zeffirelli's standards, the designs are restrained: Act 1 was set on a brilliantly lit camp-ground; no cigarette factory in sight. Indeed, there are some strangely minimal touches: the cell where José guards Carmen is suggested by a simple wall.

But the bullfight procession of the final act is staged with Barnumesque flair, with an unusually large mob of super-

Carmen
New York Met

numeraries and seven lovely horses. And the stabbing is convincingly graphic, eliciting gasps from the audience.

The best singing comes from Plácido Domingo, who is enjoying a remarkable vocal renaissance. His warmly coloured, exquisitely phrased performance as Don José was his best night here in years. Angela Gheorghiu performed the role of Micaela with uncommon vitality.

But as so often, the main debit was in the name-part. Waltraud Meier acted the role with persuasive emotional intensity, conflicting passions flickering across her face like dappled sun and shadow, but her vocal performance was beset with problems. And as Escamillo, Sergei Leiferkus was wooden and vocally miscast. But the Met orchestra and chorus performed with its wonted power, conducted by James Levine.

JAMIE JAMES

VISUAL ART: John Russell Taylor sees clear method in Hockney

Hockney's flower

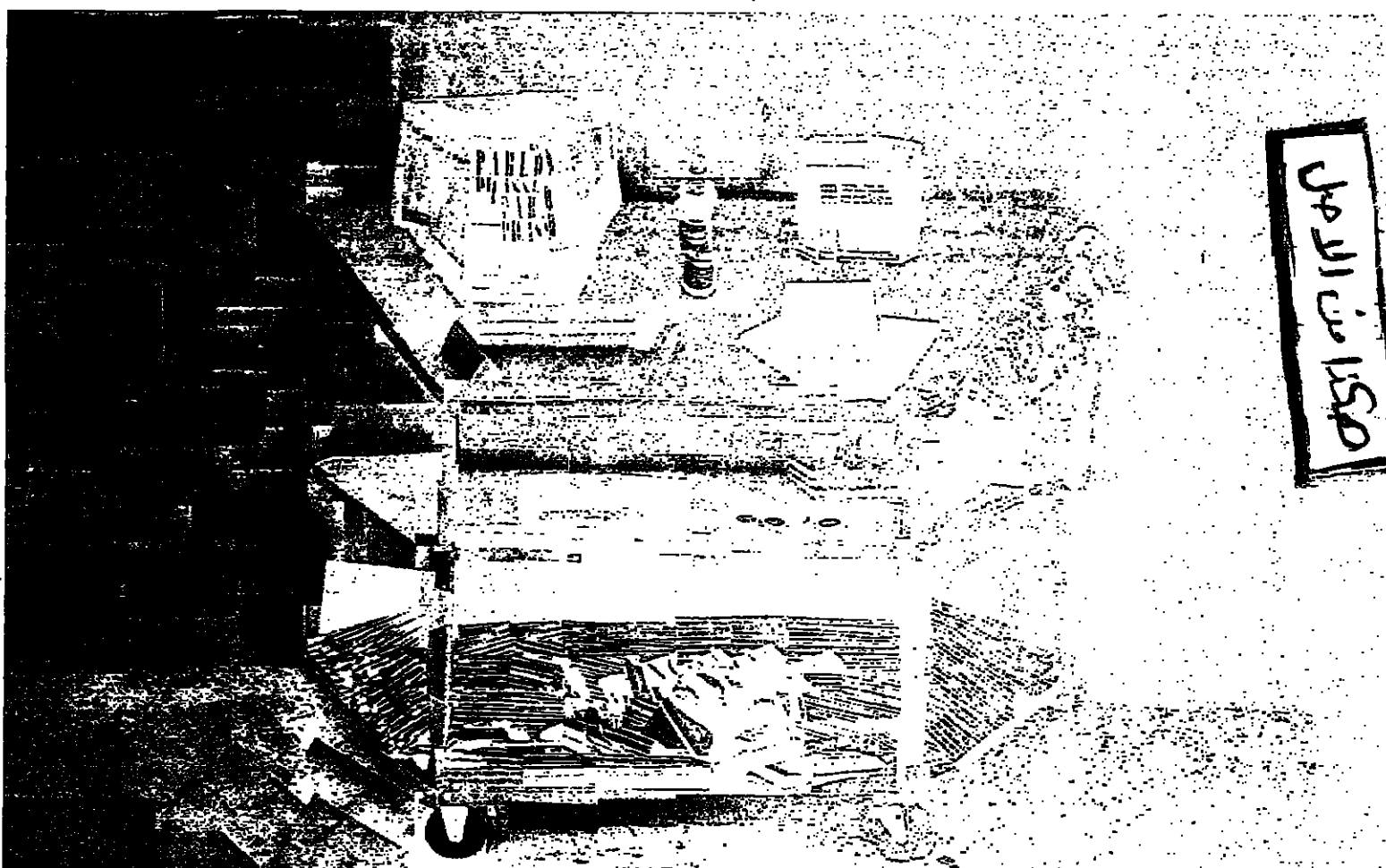
In his own way, David Hockney is a national institution. But then so is Beryl Cook. And the way many serious art folk talk about Hockney, you would think there was little difference between them. Very amusing, very colourful and decorative, no doubt. Brilliantly versatile, full of individual invention, and gratifyingly well regarded in other countries too. But is he really substantial?

We have not had a proper opportunity to find out for ourselves since the 1989 Tate retrospective. This is one reason why the new retrospective in Manchester, called *You Make the Picture*, is both useful and enjoyable. It covers the years from 1982 to date, from the first photo-collages to the latest abstracts. If this has the air of an arbitrary progression, the sense of it becomes apparent as you walk round the show.

Even at a glance the pictures give so much sensuous pleasure that the suspicion immediately arises that there is something in Hockney that gets up the nose of ingrained English puritanism. But if so, the puritans are oddly unobtrusive, for whatever Hockney's image as a hedonist, his development is deeply thought-out. Everything in this show demonstrates the rigorous logic and consistency in what he does. It starts with the photo-collages because it was through them that he came to question the whole Western convention of perspective and pictorial space.

The very first collages are games, jigsaw puzzles, the challenge being to see how extensive a picture can be put together from individual Polaroids without losing the conventional illusion of Western seeing altogether. But then around the time of *Paint Trolley, LA* (1985) he begins to ask why. What is so sacred about this particular fashion of perceiving? Does it not make as much sense to turn Western perspective inside-out? A picture is a picture is a picture. After all, you make it, and make it what you will.

The title of the show derives from a collage of 1982, which shows a famous beauty spot, Zion Canyon, Utah, from exactly the recommended picture-taking point, though far



Paint Trolley, LA, painted in 1985. The work is one of several in which David Hockney

enough back for Hockney to take in also the appended instructions. These end optimistically: "Remember, your camera only records what it's pointed at — you make the picture." Probably when Hockney first photographed this he thought it risible, and only later did he realise that it embodied a profound truth. In the process of looking, each of us takes apart and remakes the world according to his or her own interests and needs.

This is what Hockney has been consciously doing ever since. The 1984 lithograph *The Perspective Lesson*, in which a conventionally rendered chair above is vigorously crossed out and replaced with an exploded chair below, provides the text from which this sermon is preached.

In this show we can see, even without anyone preaching at us, that there is much method in Hockney's madness. The perspectives ad-

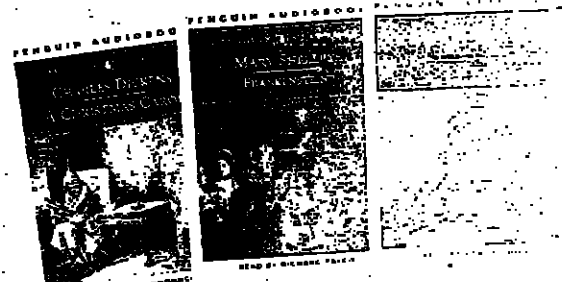
vance and retreat, furl and unfurl. A panorama of Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, becomes an experience in time as well as space, like a Chinese scroll. He begins to paint surfers' waves, and gradually they freeze into mountainous and then become abstract cones. The cones mate with other abstract shapes, and arrange themselves into Surreal landscapes, or simply into patterns. At every stage there are new media to be tried, from the photo-collage to the humble office Xerox to the

digital inkjet printer. Whatever the medium, the vision remains recognisable. The message is not the message: the message is the message.

Hockney is as much a conceptual artist as any who claim loudly to be so. It is not that he sees before he makes, and what he thinks is what he makes at the service of what he sees. The show may also mark the completion of the second journey in his work after the latest large abstraction, *Extending Pain*, he has

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In search of the heart of darkness

What horrors await us in the Congo?

Richard West on an old nightmare

The refugee crisis in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, and the prospect of Western intervention, have coincided with an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Johannesburg, reportedly carried from Gabon in equatorial Africa. This juxtaposition is bound to revive the dread of mysterious illnesses from countries surrounding the Congo basin. Last year an outbreak of Ebola in Zaire killed 246 of 350 infected people. The latest travel book by the naturalist Redmond O'Hanlon, *Congo Journey*, and a recent Hollywood film with Dustin Hoffman, *Outbreak*, both deal with deadly diseases from this part of Africa, sometimes apparently spread by apes.

O'Hanlon, who has survived almost unscathed his expeditions to the jungles of Borneo and Brazil, is struck down almost immediately by a lethal strain of malaria, only days after arriving in Brazzaville, the city across the river from Kinshasa in Zaire. He makes our flesh creep with the suggestion that the malaria mosquito may soon also carry the Aids virus, so common in this part of Africa. At present it is normally passed by bites from the bedbugs that infest Congo mattresses.

Before leaving his home in Oxford, O'Hanlon was told by a doctor at the John Radcliffe Hospital: "The Congo is very interesting. It's the HIV and HIV 2 overlap zone. If only you could send us some fresh blood samples, I'd be most grateful." The intrepid O'Hanlon is undeterred by scare stories that Aids may have spread to human beings from monkeys or apes in this part of Africa. He gambols with chimpanzees, and nurses a baby gorilla before depositing it in John Aspinall's Animal Orphanage in Brazzaville.

However, even O'Hanlon writes with horrified awe of the Congo region's Ebola virus: "You get a headache. You get a fever. Your immune system gives up. Your cells fill with replicating virus and sprout threads like hairs. You haemorrhage and clot at the same time. Your skin goes pulpy. Your guts fill with blood. You leak blood from your eyes, your nose, mouth and anus. You die and your body melts, liquefies, turns to slime. When someone picks you up to bury you, they get it, too. No vaccine, no cure."

Such are the symptoms of the killer disease in *Outbreak*, a Hollywood film which has been widely shown in Britain. A US Army medical team, under a colonel played by Dustin Hoffman, is flown to Central Africa to see the effects of a mysterious plague. One doctor is so appalled by the suffering of a victim that he vomits inside his protective mask. Before the team leaves Africa, we catch a glimpse of a trapper's net snaring a monkey, which then is illegally shipped to America and sold to a small-town petshop. The animal coughs or spits its lethal virus on to a number of human beings, who then spread it around in a cinema and airport, until the United States is gripped by an epi-

demic. Pathologists find that the victims' vital organs have been liquefied. What, one wonders, would be the effect of this film on recruits for a potential American expeditionary force to Zaire?

Outbreak and Congo Journey belong to a long tradition of explorers who went to the Congo region to study apes and, incidentally, to report on exotic diseases, cannibalism and other horrors. Soon after Charles Darwin first pronounced his theory of evolution, other naturalists wanted to find the "missing link" between monkey and man. A young French-American, Paul Du Chaillu, became the first white man to see a live gorilla, although in his subsequent book he portrayed the gentle beast as a fiend, which ravished African women and tore the fingernails out of its victims. Du Chaillu was also lucky to survive: "I suffered 50 attacks of the African fever, taking to cure myself more than 14 ounces of quinine. Of famine, long continued exposure to the tropical rain, and attacks of ferocious ants and venomous flies, it is not worth-while to speak."

The scholar, explorer and pornographer Sir Richard Burton, who followed Du Chaillu, fought off the fever in "Gorilla Land" by drinking a flask of brandy a day, beer, sherry and Madeira; as well as smoking the local cannabis, of which he was a connoisseur. As a Tory negro-phobe as well as an anti-Christian Darwinian, Burton described an African clergyman as "a gorilla, or missing link". He terrified Victorian readers with stories of how a group of cannibals "shouted with laughter when I asked a certain question".

A disciple of Burton, the Darwinian Winwood Reade, went to the Congo to gather material for his anti-Christian polemic in *The Martyrdom of Man*. Reade declared that African women were mutilated (or "circumcised") to prevent them practising the "lesbian vice". Another Darwinian naturalist, Mary Kingsley, defended African juju and fetish against the Christian missionaries. Like Burton, O'Hanlon is a devotee of wine and cannabis: like Reade his views are Darwinian and anti-Christian; like Kingsley he is a most amusing writer.

Arguments over the "missing link" in the 1860s became involved in the wider question of whether man was an ape or an angel, and more specifically, whether the African could adapt to European civilisation. The naturalists in the Congo were succeeded by novelists such as Joseph Conrad, André Gide, Graham Greene and V. S. Naipaul, who all went up river in search of eternal verities. Most often they came back echoing the dying words of Kurtz, the imperialist who goes native in Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness*: "The horror! The horror!"

Richard West is the author of *Brazza of the Congo, Exploration and Exploitation in French Equatorial Africa*.

The Government spends £350 million a year on management consultants. But is it wasted money?

The top shelf of an airport bookstall offers two prophylactics to the male libido. One is nubile and sealed inside a plastic bag. The other has no defence against idle hands. It is the business manual. Making money may be less photogenic than making love, but both are bestsellers. King Greed is as potent as King Sex.

These genres have much in common. Among recent business titles I noted, *The Naked Manager*, *Lean and Mean*, *Awaken the Giant Within*, *Unlimited Power*. Sometimes the come-on is crude: *The Way to Win*, *The One Minute Manager*, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Others are pleasantly post-coital: *Downsizing Recycled*, *Living with Uncertainty and Futuroshock*. They all lead the eye back and forth along the shelf, from better sex to a fatter wallet. And they sell. Greed books turned over \$750 million (£500 million) in America last year. The guru Tom Peters, whose latest manual is called *The Pursuit of Wow!* charges \$60,000 a seminar.

I have read little of this stuff, but two journalists on *The Economist* have now relieved me of any guilt. *The Witch Doctors* by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge is a gem of debunking. It will comfort and enrage all who have been "let go", downsized or re-engineered, delayed or outsourced, hothoused or 360-degree assessed. The book is devastating. British Government now spends more than £350 million a year on management advice. Nobody has shown that a penny is well-spent, not least the "serial fad-surfers" in the police and prison services.

The authors are relentless. No advice changes its mind more often than management theory. Each craze that sweeps the business schools one year is overturned the next. No sooner does Drucker declare that the worker is sovereign than Peters declares the customer is sovereign. Hammer and Champy's hugely influential *Re-engineering the Corporation* — "Don't automate,

Obliterate" — told firms to worry about costs not markets, and threw hundreds of thousands out of work. Most re-engineered companies saw a brief surge in their share price, huge executive bonuses, plummeting morale and their best workers gone. Sorry, said the gurus, we meant the opposite. You should slim gently and concentrate on consensual delaying through intuitive management to maximise core competence.

These fads streak like meteors above the corporate jungle. Middle-managers are abused and ditched for being an obstacle to change. Then they are revived as vital agents of continuity. Non-core services are outsourced and their staff fired. Then Total Quality Management insists they return. Strategic planning is essential, then useless. The modern firm must diversify, merge with competitors and go global. Then it must retrench and concentrate on its unique competitive strength. One



Peter Drucker: great thinker

Gurus of greed are not bad for business

Simon Jenkins

minute the cry is, "Think chaos... reward failure... Don't manage, lead." The next it is respect the customer and see management as a "group learning exercise".

Management theory is not strong on self-criticism. Two thirds of the companies lauded by Peters as standard bearers of excellence in 1982 were in deep trouble within five years. Hammer admits that as many as 70 per cent of the firms that claimed to have "re-engineered" themselves under his guidance failed to improve their market position. There is no evidence that firms that use gurus do better. The upheavals wreaked on corporations by theorists in America and Britain in the past decade do not seem to have helped their profits or their market share.

This is all like the doctors in *The Madness of King George*. They squabble over leeches and blisters, wield lancets, bleed veins and send in their bills. The one thing they refuse to do is leave the patient alone. I tried to discern from this book what is currently "in". Theorists are apparently now against globalisation. Super-mergers are failing to yield synergy, more often just egotistical leadership, bad decisions and falling profits. For every firm that is seeking a merger, two are de-merging. Specialisation is back, exploiting the competitive strength of states (thanks

to another guru, Michael Porter). The information technology rage of the 1980s is over. The office has been reinvented, as has the loyalty bonus and the need for staff with "institutional memory".

Greed is no longer good, except among British public utility executives. Public sectors have seized on management theory, but usually to increase the "performance pay" of bosses and to help officials avoid tough decisions. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic suffer from acute "fad lag". They are reinventing government just when business has stopped re-engineering the corporation. The NHS, the BBC and the Army are wrapping themselves in management jargon to persuade the public they offer value for money (as a prelude to demanding more).

My initial reaction to Micklethwait and Wooldridge is, hold on. All infant disciplines have their charlatans. But most of these gurus are like strate-



Tom Peters: latest witch-doctor

gists advising generals in the middle of a war. Each battle is different. It would take a genius to read every one right. Consultants charge huge fees for "translating common sense into grotesque jargon". Many behave like free-booting Trotskyites, ripping the heart out of corporations like the state planners of the 1960s. None seems able to write English.

Yet the ambition is surely sound, the greatest prosperity of the greatest number. Business is no trivial matter. The authors acknowledge that management theory has produced just one "great thinker", Peter Drucker. He is still going strong, with his relentless emphasis on people as a firm's principal asset and the corporation as a social as well as commercial institution. But there is no shortage of "thought" elsewhere. Many so-called gurus are practical men who have proved their worth. Whatever the weaknesses of management theories, they are tested daily in the market place. Micklethwait and Wooldridge accept this. It is more than can be said for other branches of economics.

The latest fad to catch my eye is that of the American, Ichak Adizes. To him the company is a biological entity, subject to the same ailments as the human body. It requires a clear-thinking head, who will respond idiosyncratically to outside stimuli. Eventually and inevitably, it ages and decays. I like this metaphor. There are always firms in trouble, crying for help. The objective of the management theorist, like that of the doctor, is to make the patient well enough to survive unaided.

Like the doctor, the business consultant is faced with an intellectual challenge. I see nothing wrong in seeking to systematise this challenge, formulate and test general laws and suggest remedies to the desperate. This may all be at the stage of primitive medicine, applying leeches and hacking off limbs on the battlefield. Medicine, too, was beset by quacks. But it too progressed by trial, error and theory. Today we are glad that it did. Likewise these witch doctors are not for shooting.

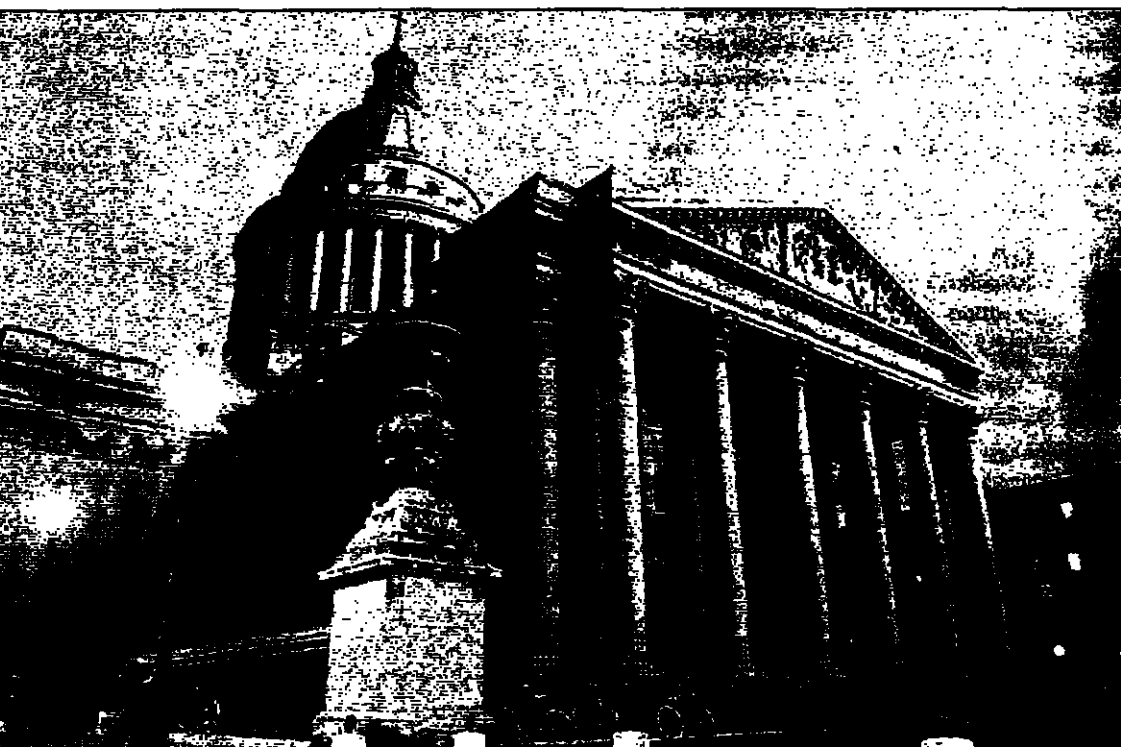
Soulless shrine of hero-worship

Today Malraux is laid to rest in the Panthéon, but his mausoleum leaves John Grigg cold

Today the remains of the writer-politician André Malraux will be buried in the Paris Panthéon, to the accompaniment of an oration from President Chirac. For a Gaullist head of state, Malraux is a politically convenient figure, since he was a Communist who turned Gaullist and became de Gaulle's Minister of Culture. As such he delivered a powerful address at the Panthéon in 1964, when the ashes of Jean Moulin — tortured and killed by the Nazis more than 20 years before — were deposited there.

And it was Moulin's tomb that François Mitterrand paid a theatrical visit at the end of his first day as President of the Republic (May 21, 1981). Accompanied by a crowd of supporters exulting in what they believed to be the triumph of socialism, Mitterrand went to the Panthéon in the evening. With a red rose in his hand he walked the last few hundred yards and then (according to *The Times*) "entered the mausoleum of some of the greatest names of the French Republic... His footsteps echoing he made his way through the maze of tunnels to the tomb of Jean Moulin... Gently the President laid his rose on the tomb."

Moulin was convenient to Mitterrand because he was a Resistance hero who could be claimed, rather spuriously, as a figure of the Left. (In fact, he was a civil servant, who had served for a time as *chef de cabinet* to a socialist minister.) Before leaving the Panthéon, Mitterrand "crossed to



The Panthéon in Paris: its crypt is the resting place of Voltaire, Victor Hugo and now André Malraux

another vault to pay homage at the tomb of Jean Jaurès — a genuinely socialist leader, assassinated in 1914. But there seems to have been no red rose for Jaurès.

The Panthéon is an odd and rather forbidding place, on the Left Bank near the Sorbonne. Though intended to be France's republican and secular shrine, its success in this role has been limited. Some great names are there, certainly, but many who would qualify ideologically are not. Moreover, the building has had a varying identity since the original architect, Germain Soufflot, started work on it under Louis XV. It was then to be a church dedicated to St Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris. But it was unfinished at the time of the Revolution, when it was completed for use as a national mausoleum.

The Panthéon's first occupant was Mirabeau, but he did not last there long. Though a wholehearted reformer, he had wanted France to remain a constitutional monarchy, and this soon became the direct heresy. He was thrown out during the Terror, when the dreadful Marat was buried in the Panthéon. But fortunately his stay was even briefer. In 1791 the body of Voltaire was brought to Paris from the Abbey of Scellières, and then carried to the Panthéon on a monumental chariot. Despite rain, 100,000 Parisians turned out to watch the procession, which lasted from mid-afternoon until 10pm. Another illustrious early recruit was Rousseau, also transferred from a burial place in the country. He lies in the crypt near Voltaire, in a wooden coffin

from which a carved hand holding a torch weirdly emerges.

Napoleon returned the building to ecclesiastical use, and it became a church for most of the 19th century. Püvis de Chavannes adorned it with mural paintings illustrating the life of the saint and other pious scenes. (Some of these are now in a very bad state.) Early in the Third Republic, the building became, once again, the Panthéon. The occasion was the burial of Victor Hugo in 1885, the supreme manifestation of republican fervour and hero-worship. After lying in state under the Arc de Triomphe, Hugo's body was followed to the Panthéon by a crowd of some two million. "For the first time in the history of mankind" (one of his biographers writes) "a whole nation was rendering to a poet the honours

usually reserved for sovereigns and military leaders".

Once again the pediment of the building bore, as it still does, the inscription in gold letters "Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante". But in the Panthéon one is more conscious of the absence than the presence of France's great men. Apart from Hugo, the only great writer there is Zola, and none of France's great artists or musicians is buried there. The only warrior of note is Marshal Lannes.

Among politicians Gambetta is the pre-eminent figure; in 1920 his heart was placed in the Panthéon under a suitably expansive monument. Clemenceau chose to be buried in his native Vendée. De Gaulle, a son of the Church, is buried at Colombey. Mitterrand, imitative of de Gaulle to the end, is also buried in a country churchyard. The only President of the Republic is Sadi Carnot (whose assassination by a fanatic is his chief claim to distinction).

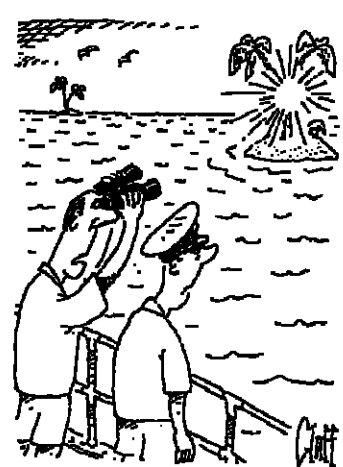
A few admirable scientists and inventors are to be found in the Panthéon. The names of Braille and Marie Curie stand out — the latter particularly, as one of the very few women to have joined the regiment of "grands hommes" (though only last year). The ashes of Condorcet were brought there in 1989, nearly two centuries after his death. Among others recently Pantheonised, Jean Monnet, architect of the European Union, deserves honourable mention (though some would disagree).

The tombs are all in the crypt. At ground level the interior is a soulless empty expanse, relieved only by Léon Foucault's remarkable clock, with its pendulum hanging from the lantern in the dome and rotating slowly as the Earth turns beneath it.

The Panthéon lacks the numinous atmosphere of buildings in which religious worship occurs. By comparison, Westminster Abbey and even St Paul's are spiritually warm and uplifting. They also contain a far more inclusive representation of the people who have made our history.

In the chair

LECTURERS at the London School of Economics believe that a new director for the college where Mick Jagger received tutelage has been chosen. After a two-year search, they say that the LSE has settled on Professor Anthony Giddens, Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Economics and Politics at King's College, Cambridge.



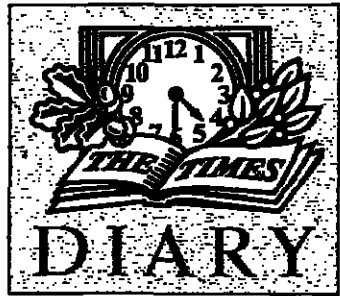
"Good Lord! It's not a mirror, it's Tony Blair's teeth!"

The LSE, hotbed for political movers worldwide, has struggled to find a replacement for Dr John Ashworth, a biologist who left in September to head the British Library.

Professor Giddens, 58, an alumnus of the LSE, which he attended after Hull University, is as dry as a Bath Oliver. He lists no recreations in *Who's Who* and his considerable literary output consists of dense political and sociological studies. His arrival would be heartily welcomed by those on the Left at the LSE.

But at a lecturers' drinks party this week, economists were in the cups of despair. Their favoured choice was Nick Stern, chief economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, had been overlooked. "It's 99 per cent certain they've gone for this man Giddens," grumbled one. "We'll have to up sticks and leave."

Among others mentioned in connection with the post have been Raymond Seitz, former American Ambassador to London; Jeffrey Jowell, head of law at University College London; and Alan Budd an LSE graduate and chief economic



adviser to the Treasury. Baroness Blackstone has also been in the frame but was quickly edged out. If Giddens were appointed she would approve — for she knows him just as she knows Ashworth.

Spinning discs

DOWN at the BBC yesterday, preposterous secrecy surrounded Tony Blair's chosen music for *Desert Island Discs*, to be broadcast tomorrow. Many now believe that the dead hand of Blair's burly press officer Alastair Campbell is involved. Campbell was sporting a new hairstyle when he attended the recording with Blair and Sue Lawley at the BBC, where he wolfed a packet of biscuits almost before the first disc was played. The new cut is

aggressive, different from the Lab leader, who is now styled to woo the female vote. It is more in the manner of Gary Rhodes, spiky-haired chef, or Nigel Kennedy, the violinist. Tony's choices feature rock music aplenty. And I wouldn't wonder if Campbell, inspired by his new hair, was playing air-guitar during the recording.

Caught at it

DO NOT place much faith in Peter Mandelson's declaration that he has hung up his methoscope and abandoned spin-doctoring. As the Tories launched their attack on Labour's 89 spending plans, a previously unknown gentleman of the press took his seat. When approached by a Conservative press officer, he declared himself to be Tristan Hunt, of the *Cambridge Evening News*. A quick call to the News, however, established that there was no such person on the staff. Mr "Hunt" was confronted and swiftly snapped under interrogation. "I'm from Operation Victory," he blubbed (it is Peter Mandelson's private *Starmag* telling of election strategy planners).

There was already an acknowledged Labour observer at the conference. David Hill, Labour's chief

press officer, has written to the *News* to apologise. Next week, Brian Mawhinney, Tory party chairman, will appeal to the Sergeant at Arms in the House of Commons to request that the flunkie's Commons pass be withdrawn.

● *Smalls were on the agenda for Michael Hutchence the other day as he went on the hunt in London's Kings Road for Y-fronts. With him was his common-law wife Paula Yates, carrying their child. Heavenly, who wore a fluffy tiger-skin all-in-one romper suit.*

After a lengthy search,



Brief encounter: Yates

Hutchence, who I always had down as either a silk boxer shorts or nothing-at-all type, found what he wanted in Jigsaw menswear: plain elasticated white briefs. He bought several packs.

Write on

AS IF the world needed another book about the Bloomsbury Set, Nigel Nicolson, son of Sir Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West is to write his memoirs.

Nicolson, the current inhabitant of Sissinghurst in Kent, has developed a literary career out of editing and collecting remains of family and Bloomsbury correspondence. His 1992 collection *Vita and Harold: the letters of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson 1910-1962* was a noted work in the genre. However, it was trashed by some critics as "gush", "smugness" and the "raking over of the cold ashes of his parents".

Hats off

RELUCTANTLY laying down his plumes of office is Lord Waddington, the family-dressed Governor of Bermuda, who returns to Blighty. He is unlikely to be missed by locals — they almost declared



Heading home: Waddington

independence on account of his governance.

Waddington's deckchair will be filled by Thurold Mascfield, High Commissioner in Lagos, as a reward for service in Nigeria — acknowledged to be the worst possible Foreign Office posting. Nigeria is trying to make amends in Britain with the London launch next weekend of the Great Nigeria People's Front, "committed to good image and development of persons and country".

P.H.S



FAITH IN THE DOME

Time for the Millennium Exhibition to meet the people

The Millennium maestros are suffering an anxiety attack. A vast exhibition, on the so far vague, flat and general theme of "time", is planned to mark the year 2000 in Greenwich. Little is yet known in detail of what visitors will see under the shallow dome to be erected on the wasteland that was this week relinquished by British Gas. The budget for the project will not be released until next month. Labour's Shadow Heritage Secretary, Jack Cunningham, worried that a future Labour government would face a wasteful financial disaster, has fired a warning shot to ministers. Anonymous sources predict that costs will surge and that the exhibition bills could reach £1 billion.

Dr Cunningham is right to be concerned. The Millennium show is certainly at the most vulnerable stage. For various reasons — not all of its own making — it is stuck in a dark trough. A privately run one-year exhibition cannot get guaranteed private money without assurance of government support. A future government would inevitably like prior evidence of private-sector confidence. The private-sector companies would like evidence of popular confidence. The public would like to know more about what the exhibition will be. The current state of the scheme fully justifies worry; but it does not justify thoughts of abandoning the project.

The total budget to be announced shortly seems unlikely to go above £750 million. The only "public" money in that sum will be £200 million from the National Lottery. The legal and company infrastructure for the project has only just been bolted together; agreement for the sale of the land by British Gas has been unnecessarily protracted. Preliminary clean-up work on the site is on schedule. The new Tube station which will serve the exhibition has already been built. Discussion continues on the vexed issue of whether the exhibition organisers should be allowed a call on lottery funds after the year 2000 to pay residual debts or tidying-up bills. An agreement that the exhibition organisers should continue to enjoy their one-

fifth share of lottery income for at least part of the year 2001 should not be beyond reach as long as the Government consults more fully with Labour than it has in the past.

Each of the pavilions at the Greenwich dome will be designed to represent some aspect of future time. Politicians and businessmen of a nervous disposition might, however, look backwards as well as forwards before succumbing to despair. National extravaganzas are leaps of faith. They can be nothing else: such enterprises are inseparable from risk. They are also indissolubly associated with pessimism confounded by events. Preparations for the ultimately successful Great Exhibition of 1851 were not attended by rising public excitement. Herbert Morrison had to force the plan for the Festival of Britain through a reluctant Cabinet. Not one major newspaper supported the 1951 celebration until almost the moment it began. Scorn was poured on the organisational details, ticket costs and the alleged fragility of the Skylon, the tall metal exclamation mark which reached into the air above the capital. By the time the exhibition was over, so was the scepticism.

None of this means that the exhibition planned for 2000 will become the envy of the world. That will depend on whether the 12 "time zones" fire the imagination, strike the sparks of argument and generate the feeling that the enterprise was worthwhile. That is the issue on which the public must eventually trust or fail to trust the organisers. The legal and financial foundations are now laid. The designers of the spectacle must now take the stage and show their potential sponsors and customers more of what they intend to do. Those excited by the building itself — and by the possibility that the dome and auditorium may stand for even longer than a year — should now take to the road and vigorously sell their scheme to doubters. A thrilling and imaginative exhibition, which expressed Britain's self-confidence and skill, would lift spirits, sights and hearts. It is a prize worth fighting for.

PM VERSUS MPs

Major would still be wise to grant Parliament its debate

Had Labour's strategists been asked to design an issue which would unite against this Government the Left and Right, the Euro-sceptic and the Europhile, they would have come up with a calculated insult to the dignity of Parliament. MPs, particularly tired and depressed MPs, are notoriously protective of their institution, and nothing annoys them more than seeming affronts to its sovereignty. In the current atmosphere of heightened sensitivity to European issues, John Major's insistence that the Commons should not be allowed to debate the latest proposed regulations on the single currency was always likely to infuriate Members on all sides of the House. Labour has had to do little more than carefully fan the flames.

The scale of the anger clearly caught Downing Street by surprise. What is odd is that Mr Major did not sense this in advance. What is astonishing is that, after the European standing committee voted on Wednesday for a debate, he did not concede one. He is now relying on some quiet weekends in the constituencies, some warnings to Tory rebels from local party chairmen and next week's Budget to clear the air. None of those elements can be wholly relied upon.

This failure contains elements of all the worst characteristics of the Major administration: a stubborn determination to resist the inevitable (usually followed by humiliating reversal); a cavalier approach to executive power; a preparedness to put narrow party interests, in this case their desire to concentrate on the economic agenda, above those of Parliament; and a blustering manner born of weakness.

Presumably Mr Major is worried that in a

debate his fragile truce on the single currency with the Chancellor would come under sustained fire from their own backbenchers. Mr Major's wish to shift his position might then be constrained by Mr Clarke; or alternatively, the Chancellor, his position "battered" by sceptical assaults, might lash out and show his true support for monetary union. In either case the truce would be broken.

Yet Mr Clarke is normally capable of calm under fire. However incredible a "wait and see" approach to EMU may be in the long run, it can be defended for the moment. Had such a debate been held quietly on a Friday, with an unamendable motion, the fuss would have lasted barely a day. As it is, the Prime Minister may either lose the vote that he must hold on the regulations or, if he concedes a full debate, find that it has become a highly acrimonious one.

There is even the possibility of a vote of confidence; and a few commentators are talking of an early election. If the Prime Minister were tempted to make the vote on the regulations a vote of confidence, as he did during the passage of the Maastricht treaty, he would quite probably lose. If, instead, the two votes were separated, he should be able to hold on. But it is a measure of the anger in the House that any Tories should consider voting against the Government in a confidence vote.

However irritated he may be by his whips' misjudgment and by Labour's opportunism, the Prime Minister would still be best advised to grant a debate on the monetary regulations. To risk being forced to do so because the motion is defeated would be a worse humiliation.

SHELL SHOCKED

The oil company should wield its influence for good in Nigeria

The failure of the Commonwealth to obtain any assurance from Nigeria that it will release political detainees or speed up a return to democracy is not surprising. General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship has shown complete contempt for world opinion. Its belated acceptance of a seven-man Commonwealth mission this week was a ploy to fool human rights campaigners and destroy the Commonwealth's united stand on sanctions. The team had no access to General Abacha himself, was unable to meet the leading opposition figures and met only intransigence from Tom Ikimi, the Foreign Minister. The response in Europe has been to renew the sanctions against Nigeria for a further six months. But no one should imagine that these are more than pinpricks against the isolated and arrogant junta in Abuja.

The point of these measures is to force more humane behaviour by the Nigerian military towards the impoverished and long-suffering population. Sanctions are always blunt weapons, however, and it is clear that unless they include the one weapon that could cripple Nigeria's economy — an oil embargo — they will not persuade General Abacha to change his treatment of political opponents and human rights activists. Britain argues that an oil embargo is ineffective unless it is enforced by all the main importers of Nigerian crude,

including the United States. And already the Commonwealth line is beginning to crack: while Britain and Canada are ready to step up other sanctions short of an oil embargo, African countries are having second thoughts. Nigeria has skillfully played on these divisions, by the selective release of dissidents and suggestions of favourable oil contracts.

There is, however, one important source of pressure that could help the Ogoni people, the main victims of the military crackdown. Shell, the oil company that has by far the largest concession in Ogoniland, has been widely held responsible for polluting the Ogoni homeland and neglecting the inhabitants whose lives have been ruined by the oil boom. After the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a campaign was launched to force the multinational to acknowledge its responsibilities and distance itself from the Nigerian Government.

After months of defensive insistence that the parent company could not dictate Shell's Nigerian operations, the Anglo-Dutch concern has changed its stance. Shell now wants to show that it has not colluded with General Abacha. The Ogonis maintain that the company responsible for the bulk of Nigeria's hard currency earnings is still not doing enough. Shell has worked hard to clean up its record as well as the landscape. It should be held to its new words.

Ethical criteria for investment policy

From Sir Alan Muir Wood, FRS, FEng

Sir, May I present an alternative view on "ethical" investment trusts to those quoted by Caroline Merrell in her recent article, "Right environment for green funds" (Weekend Money, November 16).

Several years ago, on the initiative of a group of New York City pension fund managers, a number of US organisations were vetted as to their policy in relation to the environment and their success in achieving their objectives. Oil companies, for instance, were asked to define and monitor those of their policies designed to avoid major incidents of marine pollution.

Such criteria seem to be less subjective, and to make much more sense, than those cited by Mr Frank Bligh of the Stewardship Fund as being either "positive" ("companies that supply the necessities of life, those that give a high-quality service and benefit to the community, as well as companies that help the environment") or "negative" ("companies which harm the environment, invest in oppressive regimes, exploit the Third World, or are involved with alcohol, nuclear power, gambling or defence").

There is a place for the use of investment to apply pressures for the development and maintenance of high industrial standards in social and environmental matters; but selling of "ethical" investment trusts such as those quoted in your article should be accompanied by a health warning that they are suitable only for total abstainers, pacifists and those prepared to revert to a life-style of energy consumption (directly and indirectly on their behalf) reduced by say 50 per cent.

Policies of this kind would certainly eliminate the private car.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN MUIR WOOD,
Franklands,
Pangbourne, Berkshire.
November 20.

Weekend Money letters, page 45

Firearms Bill

From Mr Richard Phillips

Sir, With the new Bill now almost guaranteed to reach the statute book (reports, November 19), rifle and pistol clubs, such as the one that I belong to have been placed in an impossible dilemma.

To comply with the requirements of the current Bill, we will have to spend considerable sums. Fortunately, having been around since 1906, our financial affairs are such that we probably can fund the works without resorting to loans, grants and other sources of finance. However, next summer a new government could well bring in further measures that would render all the work carried out to satisfy the current legislation obsolete.

Many clubs may feel that, whilst they can afford to carry out the works on the basis of the number of members who will continue shooting with 22 pistols, they cannot take the risk of investing in such a speculative capital project. If they wait to see how things look after the general election they are likely to fall foul of the regulations now going through Parliament.

Whilst the Government may be congratulating itself on the result of the vote, the reality is that the anti-shooting lobby has won. In order to save clubs from spending large sums of money that they may not have, I suggest that the implementation period for the current legislation takes into account the possibility of a change of government in May.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. PHILLIPS,
c/o Ham and Petersham
Rifle and Pistol Club,
Ham Street, Richmond, Surrey.
November 21.

Birth attitudes

From Mr Julian Thomas

Sir, It is reported today that Mrs Diane Blood has been denied the opportunity to have her late husband's baby by those who know best for us in the Human Fertilisation and Embryo Authority. By contrast, we read in the same issue that abortions have risen nearly 7 per cent following last year's Pill health scare.

It seems a sorry reflection on our attitudes to human life when we are happy to allow people to dispose of babies they don't want, yet not allow someone to have one that is clearly very much wanted.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN THOMAS,
65 Windsor Road, Chobham, Surrey.
November 22.

Time for bed

From Mr David J. Prescott

Sir, An appropriate bedtime for children (letters, November 19)? The Labour Party moralises in vain.

With a general election looming, most of the adult population will soon be yawning long before their offspring.

Yours faithfully,
D. J. PRESCOTT,
32 Greenwood Avenue,
Bolton-le-Sands, Lancashire.

School league tables under scrutiny

From Mrs Elizabeth Roche

Sir, Rather than seeking to add more information to school performance tables, as Mr David Blunkett suggests (letter, November 20), would it not be more pertinent to inquire what an 11-year-old with a reading age of 9 is doing in a secondary school in the first place? Why not follow the example of those continental countries where annual promotions depend on passing not merely another birthday, but a test which ensures that all those moving up to new classes have successfully completed the work of the old ones?

It is difficult not to feel that facing pupils with work which must inevitably be beyond them from the start, and can only become more so as time goes on, has to be one of the primary causes of teenage disaffection with education in general.

Rescuing those who are clearly out of their depth at an early stage might well result in their reaching a significantly higher level of achievement than they could ever aspire to if left to fall ever further behind. At the same time it might well prove that having a definite goal to aim at each year would have a wonderfully concentrating effect on the minds of the able but less strongly motivated.

It is also tempting to wonder why a child whose reading age is two years ahead of his chronological one is forced to wait till the age of 11 before being permitted to enter a secondary school and, ultimately, whether at least some of the problems besetting education in this country could not be at least partly solved by adopting a less age-dominated approach.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH ROCHE,
31 Sidingfield Fields, Tiverton, Devon.
November 20.

From the Headmaster of
Sherborne School

Sir, Once again the Government's league tables of schools are being given much space and publicity in *The Times*. Frustratingly, you continue to use the age cohort as opposed to the year cohort as your base at GCSE level, and despite the fact that the

figures for both these bases are now available for most independent schools and some state schools.

Presented thus, your table shows that only 87 per cent of Sherborne's candidates achieved five or more GCSEs at Grade C or above. This is not true: all Sherborne's candidates achieve that benchmark. The table tends to discriminate against boarding schools where, for many reasons, some candidates are not prepared for GCSE until they are slightly older.

Similarly, at A level your tables are based on total Ucas points and therefore reflect the number of A and AS levels taken. This disadvantages those schools, like Sherborne, who think that they offer a better programme of study, complementary to A level, than the present AS syllabuses. Universities offer places on the basis of A-level grades, not on Ucas points.

Finally, I do wish that more than just lip-service was paid to value added. If you and the Government do want to publish league tables, then please take account of our pastoral care, the work of the chaplaincy, our two orchestras, concert band, swing band, jazz bands, ten annual play productions and the fact that our first four rugby XV's are still undefeated by British opposition.

Yours faithfully,
PETER LAPPING, Headmaster,
Sherborne School, Dorset.

From Dr Julia Matthews

Sir, I have extracted the following data from your Schools Report (November 20): of the 3,908 schools in England showing both 1995 and 1996 percentages of five or more GCSE A-C passes, 38.71 per cent achieved lower results in 1996 than in 1995. In Wales, from 248 schools, the figure is 27.42 per cent.

The suggestion that publication of league tables leads to better results appears not to apply to these schools. Perhaps this could be explained by that well-worn cliché that statistics can be manipulated in many ways?

Yours sincerely,
JULIA MATTHEWS,
50 Sydney Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.
November 20.

Nigeria visa protest

From Mrs Glens Kinnock, MEP for South Wales East (Socialist Group Labour)

Sir, It was regrettable that Mr Jan Pronk, the Development Minister of the Netherlands, saw fit to invite Chief Tom Ikimi, the Nigerian Foreign Minister, to attend a seminar in Brussels today.

The Netherlands will take the presidency of the European Union in January and has a fine record on development and human rights issues. It is therefore shocking that such a decision was taken, despite the visa restrictions laid down by the Council of Ministers following the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni activists a year ago.

The visa restrictions cover all those closely associated with the military junta in Lagos which was responsible for the executions, and the granting of a visa to Chief Ikimi clearly fits into this category.

At the time of Ken's execution many of us protested at the weakness of the European response. Now, we are outraged that even such mild sanctions can be breached in this way. There can be no justification for this decision. It is an appalling indictment of EU member states who are prepared to give respectability and legitimacy to Abacha's regime.

Yours sincerely,
GLENYS KINNOCK,
European Parliament,
97 rue Belliard,
Brussels B-1047.
November 22.

Effect of strikes

From Dr John Valdimir Price

Sir, Last week and this, postal deliveries in my area of north London have again been disrupted by strikes. When I talked on the telephone to a spokesman for the Communication Workers Union, he seemed to think that strikes do not diminish the number of jobs in an industry.

Has there been any industry in the past thirty years in which the number of jobs has been increased as a result of strikes?

This letter is being faxed to you.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN VALDIMIR PRICE,
8 Cloudeley Square, NI.
November 19.

A different ballgame

From Mr Stephen Woodward

Sir, Your report (November 20) on negotiations about eligibility for the Boat Race quotes Oxford's director of rowing as saying: "We are hoping to achieve a level playing field."

Let us hope that no one moves the goal-posts.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN WOODWARD,
Stelling Oast,
Petham, Canterbury, Kent.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Keeping the roofs on English homes

From Mr R. F. Moffatt

Sir, It appears that the Taste Police (aka English Heritage), fresh from the nonsense they made in the case of the Plastic Door (report and photograph, November 6), are mounting a campaign to oppose the use on house roofs of what they call "cheap industrial claddings, often from abroad" in place of traditional stone ("Cheap roofing tiles 'threaten diversity of old England'", report, November 14).

They say that in the past "each village used its local quarry" and that "current demand... could be met by reopening these old quarries". Both these statements are simply untrue. Yes, this village had its own stone pit: it used to be on my land. But, like almost all local pits, it never produced stone of the quality needed for roofing.

My old farmhouse has a roof made of what are called "Stonesfield" slates — the common Cotswold type. This does not mean they were picked up from a field full of stones — they came from the village of Stonesfield, about 15 miles away, whose quarries produced a special very stratified limestone which could be split into slates.

To do this needed an incredibly labour-intensive process, the cost of which, even 200 years ago, was excessive. Once the Oxford Canal was navigated our Georgian forebears — those paragons of good taste and good sense — turned happily to Welsh blue slate.

There is a problem with our old stone roofs: they are falling to bits, and sooner or later it will not be possible to patch them. However, that problem will certainly not be solved by the facile remedies suggested by English Heritage.

Meanwhile, happily, the problem is no longer mine. After more than 30 years of toil and expense I have built myself a new house (stone, of course, because good building stone is still available) and live snugly under a fine new roof of dark grey slates — much admired and imported from Italy.

Yours sincerely,
R. F. MOFFATT,
Daisy Hill, Duns Tew,
Nr Banbury, Oxfordshire.
November 16.

No Europhobe

From Dr Alan Sked

Sir, I don't know why the UK Independence Party is described as Europhobic by Valerie Grove in her interview with Count Nikolai Tolstoy (November 15). The party has nothing at all against Europe but simply opposes European government, European laws, European bureaucracy and a European super-state. Its policy is to replace membership of the European Union by a free-trade agreement.

It would be hard to describe somebody as quintessentially European as Count Nikolai Tolstoy as Europhobic. As for myself, the leader and founder of the party, I know five European languages, have published books in Czech, German and Italian and have translated a book from Hungarian. I am presently writing the Penguin *History of Post-War Europe* and the *Macmillan History of Nineteenth Century Europe*. For ten years at the LSE I headed the largest postgraduate programme on the European Union of any UK university.

If these credentials make me a Europhobe, what do I have to do in order to become a Europhile?

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SKED (Leader),
UK Independence Party,
80 Regent Street, W1.

Fit for the job?

From Mr Martin Pearce

Sir, Mrs Helen Tarnoy (letter, November 20) names Winston Churchill as a prime example of one whose genius would have been lost had his employment been conditional on an alcohol blood test. I would nominate the great jazz pianist, Fats Waller.

Fats had it written into his contract that he must have a sizeable measure of gin sitting on the piano before he played. He also used to have two cases of whisky delivered to the band bus at the start of each tour, one for the band and one for himself.

His son Ronald, asked what his father did, replied: "He drinks."

Yours faithfully,
M. PEARCE,
The Chapel,
Church Lane, Islip, Oxfordshire.

From Mr C. Cambouropoulos

Sir, As a Greek and a Macedonian I would like to nominate my own compatriot: Alexander the Great. Rumour has it that he died during one of his not infrequent binges.

Noah does not qualify, of course, for "he drank of the wine, and was drunken" (Genesis ix, 21) after he had carried out his mission.

Yours faithfully,
C. CAMBOUROPOULOS,
Ashcroft,
Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex.

From Mr Nicolas Tucker

Sir, My candidates would be Mozart, and the case-of-Bollinger-a-day Francis Bacon; but I suppose the latter, at least, was mostly self-employed.

Yours faithfully,
NICOLAS TUCKER,
24 Hasker Street, SW3,
November 20.

VIRGINIA CHERRILL

match the first by artificial staining. A tooth claimed to be from the second site shows signs of artificial staining and almost certainly came from the spurious Piltdown site. The true fossil "probably belongs to the skull from the first site."

Nor, Dr. Oakley states, are the Piltdown implements "all they should be." Tests show that some of them have been stained artificially to look more than their age. The famous Piltdown bone implement, for example, is certainly a genuine fossil elephant bone, but it appears to have been worked in a way that should be impossible with a crude flint tool. It was, in fact, made too perfect. Mr. Dawson suggested that the tool might have been turned up in gravel by a workman and thrown into the hedge where it eventually came again to light.

Those scholars who were deceived, often against their judgment, have more in their defiance than the extraordinary skill brought to bear by the creator of the hoax. Their successors point out that since 1912 and 1913 many more links in the chain of human evolution have been discovered to serve as a guide. One of them is the pre-Neanderthal Swanscombe Man, which has been given a complete true bill under the fluorine tests that prove the Piltdown ape-man to be bogus.

